

Radu Petre Mureșan

Old Calendarism in Romania

*People, Facts, Stances:
1924-2022*

Presa Universitară Clujeană

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English translation by Maria Yvonne Băncilă

Presa Universitară Clujeană

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Referenți științifici:

Pr. Prof. univ. dr. Gabriel-Viorel Gârdan

Pr. Conf. univ. dr. Cristian Sonea

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Tehnoredactare computerizată: Cristian-Marius Nuna

Universitatea Babeș-Bolyai

Presa Universitară Clujeană

Director: Codruța Săcelean

Str. Hasdeu nr. 51

400371 Cluj-Napoca, România

Tel./fax: (+40)-264-597.401

E-mail: editura@ubbcluj.ro

<http://www.editura.ubbcluj.ro>

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Preface to the English-language edition

In my *Conclusions* to the study *Old Calendarist Movement in Romania: A History (1924–2010)*, published in 2012, I wrote: “I am convinced that the present book will ruffle feathers and upset certain sensibilities, and will generate reactions and debates, both in Orthodox theological milieus, and in the Old Calendarist circles. On the one hand, the Romanian theological sphere evinces an inexplicable tendency to shroud this topic in mystery, since they seem to shy away from tackling it or they avoid it completely. Old Calendarism is part of the history of the Church – a history that should be faced squarely – and it is also a missionary-pastoral matter which should be dealt with very seriously and responsibly.

On the other hand, as far as Old Calendarist groups are concerned, they evince a triumphalist attitude and sectarian-exclusivist spirit, and tend to offer a romanticized view on certain events or persons, in order to appear as victims or to denigrate the Orthodox Church. Hopefully, the archive information made accessible by the present study will correct certain misperceptions, will raise questions, and will prompt sincere, constructive inquiries to find the truth”¹.

I resume the discussion ten years later, starting from the remark that my study has failed to generate in the country the reactions and debates I had anticipated, in either the Orthodox theological circles or the Old Calendarist milieu. Instead, and rather surprisingly, it was cited more often abroad than in Romania, by historians and experts in the comparative study of religions, speakers of Romanian language. I mention the 2014 review published by Andreea Petruescu in *Südost-Forschungen*², where she stated: “The book authored by Radu Petre Mureșan is a piece of pioneer research (*Pionierarbeit*) into the history of Old Calendarism. His monograph is the first endeavour to approach this topic in an academic manner, and also the first one to substantiate its argumentation with archive documents”. Petruescu considered that one of this book’s merits lies in its “endeavour to reconstruct the history of Old Calendarism academically, by tapping into archive materials”, while she regarded as a shortcoming the fact

¹ Radu Petre Mureșan, *Istoria stilismului în România (1924–2010)*, Agnos, Sibiu, 2012, p. 179.

² Andreea Petruescu, “Radu Petre Mureșan, Stilismul în România (1924–2011)” (*Der Stilismus in Rumänien (1924–2011)*), Sibiu, Agnos, 2012, 238 S, *Südost-Forschungen* 73 (2014), pp. 628–630.

that the author addresses many aspects and controversies, without investigating all of them in depth, and that his choice of sources fails to provide multiple perspectives, because he mainly employs sources that illustrate the standpoint of the Romanian Orthodox Church, concluding that there is generally a need for “*more extensive archive research and objective distancing from the research topic.*” The conclusion of the reviewer was that my work provides an important overview on the history of Old Calendarism and that it offers useful insights as introductory literature for those who intend to further investigate this subject-matter.

At the time, Andreea Petruescu was a PhD student of the University of Vienna, supervised by Prof. Oliver Jens Schmitt – a reputable specialist in the history of South-Eastern Europe (himself a speaker of Romanian language) – working on a thesis entitled “*Mișcarea țărănească împotriva statului modern. Stilismul în România, 1924–1936*”/ *Bauernbewegung gegen den modernen Staat. Der Stilismus in Rumänien, 1924–1936* [*The peasants’ movement against the modern state. Old Calendarism in Romania, 1924–1936*], a project awarded a grant from the Austrian Academy of Sciences. Her doctoral research resulted in studies and articles on Old Calendarism, and later she continued her investigation from the same perspective of Social History studies. In her papers that I was able to access, she meticulously analyzes the position of local actors – the Orthodox Church and the Gendarmerie, respectively – in relation to the Old Calendarist phenomenon, pointing out that these two institutions used to cast blame on each other for the situation that had been created. From the standpoint of the Gendarmerie, the clergy was to blame for failing to prepare the calendar reform and taking advantage from the confusion, by accepting requests to celebrate festal services both according to the old calendar and the revised calendar; from the standpoint of the Church, state authorities were to blame because they had reacted too late and ineffectively. Also, Petruescu has analyzed the contents of the memorandum addressed by peasants to King Carol II in 1935, and its importance as the first document whereby Old Calendarists introduce themselves and present the manifesto of their movement, thus offering a perspective from within the Old Calendarist movement³.

³ Andreea Petruescu, “Mișcarea stilistă în Basarabia, 1935–1936. Cauze și soluții. Perspective locale” [The Old Calendarist Movement in Bessarabia, 1935–1936. Causes and solutions. Local perspectives], *Caietele CNSAS*, IX, 1–2 (17–18), 2017, pp. 61–77; Andreea Petruescu, “Memoriul țăranilor stilști către Regele Carol al II-lea. Basarabia 1936” [The memorandum of Old Calendarist

Ewa Maria Kocoj, a Polish ethnologist and anthropologist, professor at the Jagiellonian University, mentions my work in *Pamięćstarychwieków. Symbolikaczasu w rumuńskimkalendarzuprawosławnym* [*Memoria vechilor epoci. Simbolistica timpului în calendarul ortodox român/The Memory of Past Epochs. The Symbolism of Time in the Romanian Orthodox Calendar*], Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków, 2013, especially in the first chapter where she addresses the Orthodox liturgical calendar, its sources, its structure, and the history of its propagation across Romanian territories (pp. 33–88).

Not least, I mention Roland Clark's book published in 2020, *Sectarianism and Renewal in 1920s Romania*, which describes religious life in interwar Romania. Ronald Clark, who masters Romanian language, is associate professor at the University of Liverpool, an expert in the history of Central and Eastern Europe and the history of interwar Romania. Ronald Clark's considerations are based on the premise that the tensions within the Church are the result of the difficult process of unification of the Romanian Orthodox Church into a single Patriarchate. In this context, Old Calendarism appears as a phenomenon profoundly hostile both to the Romanian Orthodox Church and to the modern state⁴.

Regarding my book's reception in Old Calendarist circles, I mention the article "Stilismul în România. Un ghimpe mereu de actualitate în coasta Patriarhiei [Old Calendarism in Romania. A persistent thorn in the side of the Patriarchate]", published in 2012 in the journal *Catacombele Ortodoxiei* [*Catacombs of Orthodoxy*] and intended as a response to aspects presented in my book; it was issued by Agnos Publishing House based in Sibiu, în 2012⁵. This article begins by noting

peasants to King Carol II. Bessarabia 1936]", in *Revista istorică*, tome XXVI, 2016, no. 5–6, pp. 573–591. I mention also the following works of Andreea Petrucescu-Kaltenbrunner, "Die Bekämpfung der religiös Andersdenkenden. Die rumänischen Altkalendaristen aus Cucova-Putna", 1934–1935, *Südost-Forschungen*, Band 77 (2018), pp. 216–235; "Modernization Struggles in Interwar Romania: Old Calendarists, Church and Government in Bessarabia in the 1930s", *Slavonic and East European Review*, 99 (2021), 3, pp. 520–543; *Für den Glauben, gegen den Staat: Der Altkalendarismus in Rumänien (1924–1936)*, De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2022, without being able to access.

⁴ Roland Clark, *Sectarianism and Renewal in 1920s Romania. The Limits of Orthodoxy and Nation Building*, London, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2020 (especially the chapter Old Calendarism, pp. 80–85; "Both Inochetism and Old Calendarism were grounded in traditional forms of rural Orthodox piety and sought to worship God more seriously than they believed was possible in the official Church" (p. 77); "old calendarism was simultaneously a protest against ROC and the increasing modern nation-state to interfere in village life" (p. 82).

⁵ *Catacombele Ortodoxiei*, no. 70/May–June 2012. <https://www.catacombeleortodoxiei.ro/index.php/133-arhiva-revisteii/cuprins/82-pagini-de-istorie-cont-nr-01>. *Catacombele Ortodoxiei* is the journal issued by the "Old Calendar Orthodox Church of Romania [Biserica Ortodoxă de Stil

that it is extremely difficult, indeed one would be hard-pressed to find “paged of unadulterated history, telling the truth as it is” and that historians or researchers studying these issues become biased, willingly or unwillingly, and their written records reflect the interests of the party they side with, or a particular ideology. On the other hand, the article denies the credibility of the documents in the archives of lay authorities (Police, Gendarmerie, Securitate – the state’s secret police agency etc), claiming that due to the permanent, close State-Church relationship and the sustained efforts to conceal “*certain secret agreements signed by the Church and certain concrete actions of Orthodox hierarchs*”, some of these documents have been hidden, others falsified or destroyed, while yet others have been simply “fabricated” and introduced into the archives in order to incriminate *personae non gratae*⁶.

The next reaction to my book appeared only in 2017 in the journal *Catacombele Ortodoxiei*: it was an article signed by Partenie Filipescu, and entitled “Un răspuns pentru frații noștri mângâiați de acuzele care ne sunt aduse în diferite articole de pe internet [An answer for the sake of our brothers who are saddened by the accusations brought against us in various postings on the Internet]”⁷. The author states that in 2012, when he intended to take a stand against the book written by priest Radu Petre Mureșan, while he was collecting information he simply gave up this intention, and enumerates three reasons for his decision: “*the blatant manipulation of history, taking full advantage of the fact that the period 1920–1940 and the following period are very little known to our contemporaries*”; the insinuation that Old Calendarists had been supported by the communists; the “*denigration of metropolitan Galaction Cordun to the point of cancelling him and his stance in relation to the calendar reform*”.

The author confines himself to raising a few rhetorical questions “*for our brethren who still want an answer, some comfort when our predecessors are*

Vechi din România]”, issued by Adormirea Maicii Domnului [Dormition of the Theotokos] Monastery in Bucharest, “with the blessing of His Grace Flavian Ilfoveanul”. According to the statements posted on that website, the journal was created “in order to speak to the Romanian believers about ecumenism and about the consequences of apostatizing Orthodoxy.” It also addresses topical matters such as cloning, euthanasia, the revival of paganism in today’s society. The first issue of the journal appeared in April 1999.

⁶ “*The communists, as well as the parties governing Romania before 1947, introduced in the state’s archives countless fake documents containing accusations, intended to destroy or discourage their opponents*”.

⁷ Article published in „Catacombele Ortodoxiei”, no. 103/January-February 2017. <https://www.catacombeortodoxiei.ro/index.php/133-arhiva-revistei/cuprins/1771-editorial-nr-41>.

thus slandered, or for those of weaker faith who need to be encouraged and strengthened.” The concluding remark is noteworthy: *“this new wave of hatred propagated on the internet against us, the Old Calendarists, is due to the consequences of the Synod of Crete, and to the attempts of some new-calendar adherents to find a refuge from the sweeping surge of ecumenism. And, for fear of falling into the ‘Old Calendarist heresy’, they embark on a mission of defending that faith which still exists in the Romanian Orthodox Church (!?).”*

Finally, in 2018 Ms Elena Zoderu published her book, *Mitropolitul Galaction Cordun, apărător al dreptei credințe* [*Metropolitan Galaction Cordun, a defender of the true faith*], with the blessing of His Eminence Vlasie, Metropolitan of the Old Calendar Orthodox Church of Romania, PIM Publishing House, Iași, 2018 – an apologetic work based on archive documents especially those of the former Securitate [the communist Secret Police agency]. In the introduction to her book, Ms Zoderu states: *“This book was written with the intention to present metropolitan Galaction Cordun as he truly was, not as he has been recently presented by other authors, who aimed to denigrate him and blacken his name, simply because he had the courage to take the step towards the true Orthodoxy in 1955”* (p. 7).

I am not a historian. However, as an Orthodox priest and member of the Faculty of Orthodox Theology in Bucharest, I specialize in the study of religious or spiritual movements, old and recent, active in the contemporary Romanian society. Thus my research has essentially a pastoral-missionary character. However, I am profoundly indebted to my professors in Switzerland during my postgraduate studies: prof. Jean-Francois Mayer, a great specialist in the history of New Religious Movements (at the time teaching at Fribourg University, currently the chief editor of *Religioscope*, <https://english.religion.info/about/faq/>), Jorg Stolz (sociologist, at the time director of the Observatory for Religions/Observatoire des Religions, the University of Lausanne), Pierre Yves Brandt, professor of the Psychology of Religion at the University of Geneva, and Jean-Claude Basset of the same University, who advised me to broaden my area of research by including a historical, sociological or psychological approach to the subject-matter of my investigation.

My interest in the study of Old Calendarist movement was stirred by an unexpected and painful event in the recent history of the Romanian Orthodox Church: in 2010 priest Nichita Pașcan, the confessor of Brâncoveni Monastery – a convent in the region of Oltenia, together with 29 of its 65 dwellers (nuns), left the convent and joined an Old-Calendarist group in Greece. This prompted

me to investigate the past in order to understand the phenomenon itself, since the emergence of this movement in 1924, its evolution throughout various historical periods, and its impact on today's society. My interest was also stirred by the surprising fact that Fr. Nichita Pașcan and the group of nuns who followed him did not join the Old Calendar Church of Romania, or any other Old-Calendarist group operating on the territory of Romania, but preferred to become affiliated to an Old-Calendarist group in Greece.

When I resumed my research, I gathered more details on persons, facts, attitudes, events in the history of the Old Calendarist movement, details which are included in the *Postface* to the present English-language edition. The evolution of the Old Calendarist movement knew certain landmark moments that had a considerable influence on it. In my opinion, those landmarks were: the Easter celebration of 1926 and 1929, the Law on Religious Affairs of 1948, and the Pan-Orthodox Conference of Moscow – the same year. I have sought to better connect and articulate these turning points in the history of Old Calendarism, by resorting to archive documents or sources from within the Old Calendarist movement, without claiming to have exhaustively covered their significance and importance for the later evolution of Old Calendarism.

Because the 2012 Romanian-language edition contained a few inevitable typing errors, I have corrected them. I have also added notes on terms insufficiently explained, or on historical situations created by the Romanian state of affairs, so that the text can be easily accessible to the foreign readership. The bibliography was also enriched with the latest works published on this topic, as well as older studies and articles not cited in the 2012 edition, either because they were not available at the time, or because they were unknown to me then. Finally, the book includes a list of the major events in the history of the Old Calendarist movement, and an Index for names.

Hopefully this study published in English will be highly useful to researchers into the history and religious life in the South-East of Europe, especially those interested in the specific character of religious life of Romania during the modern and contemporary period.

FOREWORD

In 1924, following the recommendations of the Pan-Orthodox Conference of Constantinople (1923), the Romanian Orthodox Church adopted the revised (or corrected) calendar. As the clergy and laypeople had not been sufficiently prepared for this decision, it was met with reluctance, especially a part of the monastic clergy. In time, the calendar issue generated tensions which were not always managed adequately by the lay and ecclesiastic authorities, and finally resulted in a regrettable rupture within the Romanian Orthodox Church.

The present book addresses the emergence and evolution of the Old Calendarist movement, as well its organization under the various names it went by, during its history (Appendix 1). The information it contains is provided by the documents found in the National Archives, the State Secretariat for Religious Affairs, as well as the Archives of the Romanian Patriarchate's Administration. This information is completed by articles of the times' publications and memoirs, researched in order to investigate the topic as thoroughly as possible. The book comprises three chapters, following the chronological evolution of the Old Calendarist movement throughout the interwar period, the communist one, and the aftermath of the 1989 events. For a better understanding of the topic, the book includes an introductory chapter addressing the calendar-related challenges met by the Romanian Orthodox Church. The second and third chapters each end with an addendum, intended to offer more extensive details and provide a starting point for later investigations into the matter.

For the interwar period, the sources I tapped into are primarily the documents issued by the Police and Gendarmerie (the National Archives, the archives of the *Ministry of Internal Affairs – the General Inspectorate of the Gendarmerie*, respectively the archives of the *Ministry of Internal Affairs – the General Directorate of the Police*), which in my opinion offer objective, credible data on the evolution of the Old Calendarist movement during the respective period. For the communist period, information is generally derived from the reports submitted by the government representatives (the *rapporteurs*) appointed within the Ministry of Religious Affairs. The local “*rapporteurs for Religious Affairs*” held a special position created by Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej within the Ministry of Religious Affairs, in order to endorse the policy of the Communist Party. They

are mentioned in Decree no. 178/1948 concerning the organization of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, appended to the Law on Religious Affairs of 1948. The rapporteurs had to be familiar with the organization, structure, administration and hierarchy of the denominations they monitored, and were required to participate in their activities in order to be able to submit reliable and well-documented reports to the Ministry of Religious Affairs. For the period following 1990, I turned to the documents provided by the Archives of the State Secretariat for Religious Affairs, as well as the information offered by the Old Calendarist groups in their own publications and their websites, which are designed to popularize the movement and provide information on it.

I confess that I found the topic to be a challenging one, for a number of reasons. In compiling the bibliography, I found abundant theological literature on the matter of the calendar, the Paschalion and the date of Easter, the difference between the revised (corrected) calendar and the Gregorian calendar, but very few studies and articles concerning the Old Calendarist movement. The notable contributions are those of Deacon Prof. Dr. Petre I. David⁸; Nicolae Popescu, *Neînțelegerea îndreptării calendarului [Misperceptions of the revised calendar]*, Europolis, Constanța 2002 (preface by Deacon Prof. Dr. Petre I. David); and Father Ștefan Argatu, *Stiliștii în România. Istoric. Adevăr. Îndreptare [The Old Calendarists in Romania. History. Truth. Clarifications]*, “Mila Creștină [Christian Mercy]” Publishing House, 2009, based on documents now part of the Archives of the Metropolis of Moldavia and Bukovina (*Mănăstirea Cetățuia [Cetățuia Monastery]* collection).

Finding relevant information in the archives was arduous work, and resulted in a collection of important documentary materials. Examining this material was equally challenging. I found that information was missing on particular events or biographies, or that some of the persons with an important role in the history of the Old Calendarist movement are well known, whereas other persons who are equally important in shedding light on this movement are insufficiently presented.

⁸ Deacon prof. dr. Petre I. David, “Timpul, ca o necesitate a înțelegerii misiunii creștine” [*Time, as a Prerequisite for Understanding the Christian Mission*], *Biserica Ortodoxă Română* no. 7–12 (1994), pp. 289–309; Idem, *Călăuza creștină pentru cunoașterea și apărarea dreptei credințe în fața prozelitismului sectant [A Christian Guidebook to Knowing and Defending the Orthodox Faith against Sects’ Proselytism]*, Arad, 1987, pp. 170–175; Idem, *Anticalendariștii sau stiliștii fii răătăciți ai Bisericii strămoșești [The Opponents of the Revised Calendar, or Old Calendarists, Estranged Sons of Our Ancestral Church]* “Îndrumătorul pastoral, misionar și patriotic”, Buzău, 1988; Idem, *Invazia sectelor [The Invasion of Sects]*, Europolis, Constanța, 1999, vol. II, pp. 11–38.

Certainly, my research cannot claim to have exhausted all the documentary sources, especially because access was not granted for the documents in the National Council for the Study of the “Securitate” [secret police] Archives (CNSAS). Its aim is to encourage research into this controversial aspect in the history of the Romanian Orthodox Church. It also aims to offer a starting point for an open, concrete dialogue with our Old Calendarist brethren. This is necessary since the apologetic literature produced by the Old Calendarist movement insists on the hardships met by the Old Calendarist adherents, both during the interwar period and under the communist regime, and brings serious charges against the Romanian Orthodox Church, which it describes as complicit with the state authorities in perpetrating these “persecutions”.

My aim is thus to offer a balanced approach to the investigation of the relationship between the Old Calendar movement and the Orthodox Church. It is not my intention to downplay the seriousness of the regrettable incidents that occurred in the interwar times, with dead and injured among both the Old Calendarists, and the police force. As the present study will show, they took place between 1934–1936 as a result of firm intervention of the authorities against actions that disrupted public concord and the public order. However, it is an overstatement to speak of a “persecution against the Old Calendar Church spanning 60 years” or “80 years of struggle in the name of the faith”⁹. The Old Calendarist movement enjoyed a special relationship with the communist authorities during the harshest years of the Stalinist period, which allowed it to grow and develop while the Romanian Orthodox Church was the source of many martyrs sent to the communist prisons.

I extend my gratitude to the staff of the National Archives, the State Secretariat for Religious Affairs, especially State Secretary assoc. prof. Adrian Lemeni, for providing the necessary documents. I also thank my fourth-year students in the Pastoral Theology Department of the Faculty of Orthodox Theology, who helped me with the arduous work of photocopying the documents used in the present book. Not least, my thanks in grateful memory of Mr Gheorghe Vasilescu, the late supervisor of the Holy Synod Archives.

⁹ Constantin Bujor, *65 de ani de persecuție a Bisericii Ortodoxe Române de stil vechi (oct. 1924–dec 1989)* [65 Years’ Persecutions Against the Romanian Old Calendar Church (Oct. 1924–Dec 1989)], Schimbarea la Față Publishing House, 1998; Florian Bichir, *Patimile Bisericii Ortodoxe de Stil Vechi* [The Tribulations of the Old Calendar Orthodox Church], “Evenimentul Zilei” newspaper, Sunday, January 4, 2004.

I. THE REVISED CALENDAR IN THE ROMANIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH: CONTEXT, HISTORY

I.1. The Julian vs the Gregorian calendar

The calendar is a time measurement system, indicating time duration and its subdivisions. The term is derived from the Latin *kalendae* which, in turn, originates from the Greek verb *καλῶ* (to call, to summon). The term *kalendae* designated the first day of every month, when the Roman citizens were summoned to the Forum in order to be informed about matters of public interest. The earliest calendars were created out of the people's need to set the date of religious feasts, and to conduct their daily activities with periodic regularity. The difficulty faced by any time measurement system lies in finding a way or a mathematical formula able to put the civil calendar year into the closest possible agreement with the tropical or astronomical year¹⁰.

In 45 BC, emperor Julius Caesar (100–44 BC) imposed throughout the Roman Empire a single calendar system named after him: “the Julian calendar”. This calendar, devised by the Egyptian astronomer Sosigenes, was a scientific, solar calendar, as was the Egyptian one, based on the apparent movement of the Sun and on the astronomical facts known in Alexandria at the time of its development. The calendar year comprised 365 days and 6 hours. The accumulated 6 hours amounted to one full day in the fourth year, which had 366 days and was a leap year (Latin *bissextilis*). According to this calendar, the spring, or vernal, equinox fell on March 24.

This calendar was received and accepted as such by the Christians. They incorporated the Christian feasts into it and introduced the division of months into weeks, inherited from the Jewish system (groups of 7 days instead of the 8 days – the octave – employed by the Romans). The Romanian names of months of the year, and the days of the week, come from Latin except for Saturday (*sâmbăta*) whose name is of Jewish origin, however inherited via Latin (*sabbatum*).

¹⁰ Pr. prof. dr. Ene Braniște, *Problema unificării calendarului liturgic în Bisericile Ortodoxe [The issue of a unified liturgical calendar for the Orthodox Churches]*, “Ortodoxia” journal, no. 2 (1955), p. 182.

Sosigenes' calendar differed by 11 minutes 14 seconds from the tropical year¹¹. This imperfection of the Julian calendar could seem insignificant over a human lifetime, but it amounted to one day every 128 years. For instance, the spring equinox fell on March 24 in Sosigenes' times, but 384 years later – at the time of the first Ecumenical Council, it fell on March 21. In time, this difference increased and became problematic because of the difficulties in determining the Easter date¹². In the 16th century, the accumulated difference had amounted to 10 days, so that the spring equinox fell on March 11 and consequently it no longer reflected astronomic reality.

In 1582, following the research and proposals put forth by renowned astronomers of the times, Pope Gregory XIII (1572–1585) decided to institute a revised calendar, which now bears his name. His reform undertook to suppress the 10 days by which the Julian calendar had fallen behind, so that the spring equinox returned to the date of March 21, as in the times of the first Ecumenical Council of Nicaea. In order to bring the calendar year into better agreement with the tropical year, it was decided to eliminate three days every 400 years, by suppressing the additional day in three successive centurial years. Thus the centurial years 1700, 1800, 1900, which were leap years according to the Julian calendar, became regular years, while the years 1600, 2000 continued to have 366 days. Thus the difference between the tropical year and the calendar year was reduced to 26 seconds, which amounted to one day every 3,300 years. This system was adopted by the Roman-Catholic states and subsequently by those that became Protestant.

I.2. The position of the Romanian Orthodox Church on the calendar issue

After the Gregorian reform was implemented, the Orthodox East continued to observe the Julian calendar. The pope invited the Orthodox Churches to accept the calendar reform, in a letter addressed to the Patriarch of Constantinople – Jeremias II (1572–1579; 1580–1594). The Orthodox rejected the calendar reform, regarding it as Catholic propaganda and as an attempt at imposing papal supremacy

¹¹ Idem, *Liturgica generală [General Liturgics]*, EIBMBOR, Bucharest, 1993, p. 124; Archdeacon prof. dr. Ioan Floca, *Calendarul bisericesc [Church Calendar]*, "Mitropolia Ardealului" journal no. 7–8 (1959), pp. 562–567; Prof. dr. Vasile Loichiță, *Calendarul [The Calendar]*, "Mitropolia Banatului" journal no. 7–9 (1957), pp. 21–24.

¹² Pr. prof. dr. Ene Braniște, *Problema unificării calendarului liturgic în Bisericile Ortodoxe*, p.190.

over the Orthodox East. Thus observing the Julian calendar became a token of Orthodoxy's resistance, and was regarded as a weapon against Roman Catholic influence.

In the Romanian Principalities, debates around the calendar began in the 18th century. In the Psalter Book of 1751, hieromonk Lavrentie of Horezu Monastery wrote a note about the delay in the Julian calendar. The same remark was later made by Elder Radu, who made a note on the Psalter of 1806, by Abbot Benedict of Neamțu Monastery in 1843, and by Archimandrite Nichifor of the Bishopric of Buzău in 1867¹³. The wider social reform undertaken by Prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza (1859–1866), included an attempt at correcting the calendar. In December 1864, the Minister of Religious Affairs, Dimitrie Bolintineanu, summoned a number of bishops in order to seek their opinion on the revision of the calendar. This resulted in the decision to establish a “Calendar Council”, which declared that the calendar matter is a purely astronomic correction, directly related to the decrees of the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea, 325 AD.

Around 1900, the issue of the calendar became a concern for some hierarchs of the Romanian Orthodox Church, for theologians as well as lay personalities¹⁴. In 1881 Bishop Melchisedec Ștefănescu rejected any attempt at implementing the Gregorian calendar, however without rejecting the notion of a calendar revision: “The Orthodox Church needs no better calendar than the one currently in use, although it is not accurate in its calculations... The Orthodox should either all keep the old calendar, *in order to maintain the unity of worship practices*, or all of them uniformly accept the new calendar, for the same reason of Church unity”¹⁵.

Primate Metropolitan Iosif Gheorghian spoke in the Senate meeting of February 19, 1889, stating that all the Orthodox Churches needed to agree on

¹³ Pr. prof. dr. Milan Șesan, “Îndreptarea și unificarea calendarului și poziția ortodoxă română” [*Revising and unifying the calendar and the position of Romanian Orthodox Church*], *Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei* no. 3–6 (March–June 1970), pp. 230–240 (p. 235).

¹⁴ See Gen. Petre Năsturel, *Noua Pascalie sau Calendar etern bisericesc, precedată de aplicarea vechilor Pascalii* [*The New Paschalion or Eternal Church Calendar, Preceded by the Application of the Old Paschalia*], Bucharest, 1901. Petre Năsturel (1854–1920), a former participant in the Independence War, mentions those who addressed the calendar issue until early 20th century.

¹⁵ Melchisedec, bishop of Roman, “Biserica Ortodoxă și calendarul” [*The Romanian Orthodox Church and the Calendar Issue*], *Biserica Ortodoxă Română* journal year V, Bucharest, 1881, pp. 561–604 (p. 591). See also “Calendarul Iulian și românii” [*The Julian Calendar and the Romanians*], in “Cronica bisericească [Church Chronicle]”, *Biserica Ortodoxă Română* year XXXI (1908), pp. 1430–1433 (after “Țara Noastră” newspaper, Sibiu, year II, no. 7 of 10/February 23, 1908).

the revision of the calendar: “I do not see this as impossible, but only on condition that all Orthodox Churches agree on a common date for the celebration of Easter. The matter of the calendar is not a dogmatic one, but unless such agreement is reached, we may find ourselves celebrating Easter while our Bulgarian, Russian, Serbian or Greek brothers are still observing the Lent”¹⁶.

Prof. dr. Constantin Erbiceanu published an article based on the research of the Greek scholar Timoleon Vulgaris, requesting to put an end to the abnormal situation created as long as the old calendar was maintained, and which no longer met social necessities, scientific standards or the religious demands: “Greeks and Russians use the old Julian calendar which, in a few centuries’ time, will necessarily end up pushing winter into spring”¹⁷. Constantin Erbiceanu opted for the revision of the Julian calendar, rather than accepting the Gregorian one, and pointed out that the Orthodox Church was reluctant to do that because of the dissent between the two Churches – the Eastern and the Western one.

I.3. The Pan-Orthodox Conference of Constantinople (1923)

In the early 20th century, the time gap between the Julian and the Gregorian calendar had accumulated 13 days, which posed difficulties not only in Church life but also in the life of civil society. International relations demanded a unified calendar, to ease political and commercial links between Eastern and Western states. Some public institutions in Romania such as the banks, the Romanian Railways, the Post and Telegraph offices, had been using the new calendar even before 1900.

After the first World War, the new calendar was adopted in public life by all Orthodox states: Bulgaria and Russia in 1918, Serbia and Romania in 1919, Greece in 1923. For a number of years, the Orthodox states concurrently used two different calendars – one in the religious realm (the Julian calendar), and the other in the public realm (the Gregorian calendar).

In 1923, the Ecumenical Patriarch Meletios IV (1921–1923) proposed that a Pan-Orthodox assembly should convene at Constantinople, summoning representatives of the Autocephalous Orthodox Churches, in order to bring the old

¹⁶ *Reforma calendarului [Calendar Reform]*. “Cronică bisericească [Church chronicle]” (editorial) in *Biserica Ortodoxă Română*, year XIII (1899–1900), p. 1156.

¹⁷ Acad. prof. dr. Constantin Erbiceanu, “Reformarea calendarului iulian” [*The Reform of the Julian Calendar*], *Biserica Ortodoxă Română*, year XII, 1898–1899, pp. 23–43.

calendar into accordance with the astronomical realities. This was the task of a committee made up of bishops, professors of theology, astronomy experts, who sought the best possible solutions in order to correct the calendar. The delegation of the Romanian Orthodox Church included Archimandrite I. Scriban, Professor Drag Demetrescu and Professor Petru Drăghici¹⁸.

The conference succeeded in bringing the calendar year and the astronomical year into accordance for a long span of time, so that the vernal equinox would exceed March 21 only 42,772 years later¹⁹. The reform consisted in:

- Eliminating the 13 days by which the Julian calendar was behind the solar one, and bringing the vernal equinox from March 8 to March 21. Thus the day of October 1, 1924 became October 14.
- In order to prevent the calendar year from falling behind the tropical year in the future, it was decided that among the centurial years, the leap years are only those which divided by 9 produce a remainder of 2 or 6, while the others are regular, 365-day years. According to this calculation, the following centennial years: 1900, 2100, 2200, 2300, 2500, 2600, 2700, 2800, 3000 are regular years, while the years 2000, 2400, 2900 are leap years. In this way, the astronomic vernal equinox will differ from the calendar date March 21 only after a very long time, more precisely in 42,772 years' time, whereas according to the Gregorian calendar it becomes unsynchronized after 3,326 years, and according to the Julian calendar after 128 years.
- The year's structure is the same as in the Julian calendar. Divergences between the two calendars will appear as late as the year 2800 AD which, according to the revised (corrected) calendar, is a regular year whereas according to the Gregorian calendar it is a leap year (in other words, March 1, 2800 for us will be February 29 in the West).

¹⁸ Petru Drăghici, *Însemnări de la Conferința reprezentanților Bisericii Ortodoxe ținută la Constantinopol* [Notes on the Conference of the Orthodox Churches' Representatives, Held in Constantinople], Bucharest, 1923; Pr. prof. dr. Milan Šesan, "Îndreptarea și unificarea calendarului și poziția ortodoxă română" [Revising and Unifying the Calendar and the Romanian Orthodox Position], p. 236; "Conferința inter-ortodoxă din Constantinopol" [The Inter-Orthodox Conference of Constantinople] (report), *Biserica Ortodoxă Română* journal, June 1923, pp. 660–664; See also Patrick Viscuso (ed.), *A Quest for Reform of the Orthodox Church. The 1923 Pan-Orthodox Congress. An Analysis and Translation of Its Acts and Decisions*, Berkely, CA, Inter-Orthodox Press, 2006.

¹⁹ Prof. Dr. Vasile Gheorghiu. „Calendarul” [The Calendar], *Mitropolia Banatului* no. 7–8 (1957), pp. 17–30

- Fixed date feasts are to be celebrated on the same dates. The Holy Easter is to be celebrated according to the norms set by the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea, that is, on the first Sunday with a full moon, following the spring equinox.

In conclusion, the Conference of Constantinople did not decide to adopt the Gregorian calendar, as it is wrongly believed, but it merely corrected the old calendar, bringing it in line with the exact astronomical realities, and leaving untouched all life and worship practices. Today, with the exception of the Orthodox Church in Finland, which fully adheres to all recommendations put forth by the Pan-Orthodox Conference of Constantinople, the Orthodox Churches which observe the revised (corrected) calendar celebrate the Holy Easter according to the non-revised calendar, for the sake of uniform celebrations across the Orthodox world. It was agreed at the Conference of Constantinople that these decisions should be implemented by each Orthodox Church at the appropriate time, when circumstances became favorable.

The correction was adopted successively by the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople (1923), the Orthodox Churches of Romania, Greece, Albania and Cyprus in 1924, then the Orthodox Churches of Finland and Poland (1925), the Patriarchate of Alexandria (1928), some of the Athonite monasteries such as Vatopedi (1930), the Patriarchate of Antioch (1940) and the Orthodox Church of Czechoslovakia (1951, now presently known as the Orthodox Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia). The Patriarchate of Bulgaria adopted the revised calendar in 1968. The old calendar is still observed by the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the Orthodox Churches of Serbia and Russia, as well as the monasteries on Mounts Sinai and Athos, with the exception of Vatopedi Monastery.

On November 13, 1923, the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church decided to have the Julian calendar corrected by turning the date of October 1, 1924, into October 14, 1924²⁰. The statement released by the *Commission for calendar revision*, convened in January 1924, enumerated the scientific, economic, religious and social reasons justifying this step, stressing that “this revision does not infringe on any dogma, and does not abolish any of the canonical regulations of our Holy Eastern Orthodox Church, Moreover, the Julian calendar is not absorbed [*sic*] into the Gregorian one, but the two calendars are simply unified in the realm of public (civil) life, by renouncing the 13 days; however,

²⁰ “Cronică bisericească [Church Chronicle]”, *Biserica Ortodoxă Română* no. 1 (1924), pp. 33–37.

they differ in the matters of the future correction of their divergence from the astronomical year, of the worship issues, the dates of saints' feasts, and even the manner of calculating the date of Easter"²¹. In order to debate the issue of the calendar, the Holy Synod was extended to include Archimandrite Prof. Dr. Iuliu Scriban, professors Traian Lalescu (a renowned mathematician) and Constantin Chiricescu, as well as Senator Gheorghe Drăghici²².

After 1923, the issue of the liturgical calendar and the Paschalion (Paschal calendar tables) continued to be included among the matters of general interest for the entire Orthodox world. It was debated at the Pan-Orthodox Synod held at Vatopedi Monastery (June 8–23, 1930), where the delegation of the Romanian Orthodox Church was led by Bishop Tit Simedrea²³, at the first Congress of Orthodox Theology (Athens, November 29 – December 6, 1936), as well as the Conference of Orthodox Autocephalous Churches held in Moscow in July 1948.

1.4. The Conference of Moscow (1948)

The Inter-Orthodox Church Conference of Moscow was held in 1948 to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the autocephaly of the Russian Orthodox Church. It was certainly highly significant, given the historical context with communist regimes being installed in Eastern Europe, as it aimed to highlight the pre-eminence of the Russian Patriarchate over the other Orthodox Churches. The conference was attended by: Patriarch Aleksey I of Moscow and All Russia; Kallistratos, Catholicos-Patriarch of Georgia; Gabriel, Patriarch of Serbia; Justinian, Patriarch of Romania; and Stefan, Exarch of Bulgaria. On behalf of the Church of Antioch participated Metropolitan Elias of Lebanon, and Metropolitan Alexander of Emessa; on behalf of the Autocephalous Orthodox Church of Poland: Timothy, Archbishop of Białystok; on behalf of the Orthodox Church of Albania, Bishop Paisios of Koritsa; and the Exarch of the Moscow Patriarchate in Czechoslovakia, Eleutherios Archbishop of Prague.

The matter of the calendar was included among the items on the conference agenda. The position of the Romanian Orthodox Church was presented by Rev.

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 35.

²² "Cronică bisericească", "Biserica Ortodoxă Română", February 1924, pp. 106–108.

²³ Assoc. prof. dr. Alexandru Ioniță, *Tit Simedrea Mitropolitul. Repere biografice [Metropolitan Tit Simedrea. Biographical Notes]*, Constanța, 2002, p. 57.

Prof. Dr. Petre Vintilescu, in his report entitled *Considerations on the revision of the calendar*.

According to the Resolution on the calendar, passed on July 17, 1948²⁴, the Conference of Moscow made the following decisions:

- In order to avoid divergences in the celebration of the Holy Easter, caused by the different calendar systems employed by the Autocephalous Orthodox Churches, the conference deems it mandatory for the whole Orthodox world to celebrate the Holy Pascha uniformly, according to the old (Julian) calendar, in accordance with the Alexandrian Paschalion;
- Until the best possible calendar is devised and ratified, the Conference considers that for the unmovable (fixed) feasts, each Autocephalous Orthodox Church may employ the calendar in use in the respective Church;
- The Conference considers that both clergy and laity are to follow *the calendar of the local Church within whose jurisdiction they reside*, as one of the customary practices of the respective Church, observed as commanded by the Holy Canons for the sake of unity and Christian love²⁵.

We note that the hierarchs attending the Conference, who observed different calendar styles, celebrated the Holy Liturgy together and received the Eucharist from the same Holy Chalice, while the representatives of the Old Calendarist movement were not invited to participate.

We also note that the Consultative Meeting of the World Council of Churches took place between March 16–20, 1970 at Geneva, discussing the possibility to have the Holy Easter celebrated uniformly on the same day. This Consultative Meeting highlighted the fact that the current situation of the Christian Church was no longer similar to the situation 1,600 years earlier, when the Church was centered and developed around the Mediterranean Sea. The vernal equinox for

²⁴ “Rezoluțiile adoptate în Conferința Ortodoxă de la Moscova” [*Resolutions adopted by the Orthodox Conference of Moscow*] in *Ortodoxia* journal no. 1 (1949), pp. 123–124; the text of the Resolution was published in *Biserica Ortodoxă Română* journal, year 1948, no. 11–12, pp. 652–653.

²⁵ However, the Ukrainian and Serbian Vicariates continue to observe the old calendar, under the direct jurisdiction of the Romanian Patriarchate, which ordains their priests, consecrates their worship places, provides them with antimensia and with the Holy Chrism. They remember the Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church during the Holy Liturgy. Also, the Metropolis of Bessarabia, some parishes within the Archbishopric of Iași and the deanery of Dacia Rippensis dependent on the Bishopric of Severin, but located in the Serbian Banat, observe the unrevised calendar, with the blessing of the Romanian Patriarchate.

the Christians in the Northern hemisphere is actually the autumnal equinox for those in the Southern hemisphere²⁶.

Finally, the agenda of the Inter-Orthodox Preparatory Commission for the Holy and Great Pan-Orthodox Council, convened at Chambésy in July 1971, included the issue of the calendar. The document it released stated that the Orthodox Churches which had amended the calendar did so with a view to synchronizing the liturgical year with the tropical year, and the Churches which had not yet corrected the calendar would do so when they deem that the circumstances are favorable. The document showed that the matter was not a dogmatic one but merely concerned the order in the Church, and noted that “there are no canonical decrees concerning the calendar at present, except for the established Paschal tables”. The document was signed by all members of the Inter-Orthodox Preparatory Commission for the Holy and Great Council of the Pan-Orthodox Council²⁷.

²⁶ Pr. prof.dr. Athanasie Negoită, “Consultația de la Geneva” [*The Geneva Consultations*], *Glasul Bisericii* journal, XXIX (1970), no. 5–6, pp. 493–496; Idem, “Paștile la dată fixă” [*Easter on a fixed date*], *Biserica Ortodoxă Română*, no. 5–6 (1977), p. 353.

²⁷ *Un document important referitor la calendar* [*An important document concerning the calendar*], “Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei” no. 5–6 (1972), pp. 367–372 publishing the document issued at Chambes; *Îndreptarea calendarului, hotărâre întemeiată a Bisericii Ortodoxe* [*The calendar revision, a well-reasoned decision of the Orthodox Church*], “Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei” journal, no. 7–9 (1982), pp. 597–599.

II. THE OLD CALENDARIST MOVEMENT DURING THE INTERWAR PERIOD

II.1. The emergence and development of the Old Calendarist Movement (1924–1933)

In 1923, the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church decided that the recommendations issued by the Pan-Orthodox Conference of Constantinople, concerning the correction of the calendar, would come into effect in the Romanian Orthodox Church on October 1, 1924 (Appendix 2). This implementation of the revised calendar was preceded by a relatively short preparatory period, too brief to allow the population to grasp the fact that the correction of the Julian calendar did not mean adopting the Gregorian calendar, or forced conversion to Catholicism. Primate Metropolitan Miron Cristea wrote a *Pastoral Letter* on the issue of the calendar, which the priests were requested to read out in their churches²⁸. In his turn, Metropolitan Pimen of Moldavia wrote a pastoral letter entitled *Lămuriri pentru înțelesul poporului* [*Clarifications for the People*]. The 1924 issues of the “Biserica Ortodoxă Română [Romanian Orthodox Church]” Journal and other Christian publications, such as “Glasul Monahilor [The Monastic Herald]” offered many articles on the revised calendar. The most notable contribution was that of Archimandrite Iuliu Scriban, senior editor for “Biserica Ortodoxă Română [The Romanian Orthodox Church]” journal and a professor of Homiletics and Pastoral Theology at the Faculties of Theology in Chișinău (1928–1941), respectively Bucharest (1941–1943)²⁹. However, both the population and the monastic circles were insufficiently prepared overall.

²⁸ *Carte pastorală către iubiții noștri credincioși din Sfânta Mitropolie a Ungro-Vlahiei* [*Pastoral Letter to our Beloved Believers in the Holy Metropolis of Ungrovlachia*], “Biserica Ortodoxă Română”, September 1924, no. 9 (522), pp. 513–515.

²⁹ Archimandrite Iuliu Scriban, *Chestiunea calendarului la noi și aiurea* [*The Issue of the Calendar in Romania and Abroad*], “Biserica Ortodoxă Română” July 1924, 7 (520), pp. 396–402; Idem, *Românii care au scris despre calendar* [*Romanian who wrote about the calendar*], “Biserica Ortodoxă Română” August 1924, no. 8 (521), pp. 481–482. We note that Archimandrite Iuliu Scriban received the Romanian Academy Award for his work *Forty Sermons for the People*, addressed to the general population.

An article authored by Archimandrite Iuliu Scriban and published in the periodical “Glasul Monahilor” (September 1924), presented a tragicomical situation reflecting the perception of the calendar reform among the population. A priest in a Prahova Village was asked by one of his parishioners about the rumors that the calendar was about to be revised. The priest confirmed it, and the man replied: *Well, if they change the calendar, we are going to kill the mayor before they do...* In the same article, Archimandrite Iuliu Scriban argued very convincingly, demonstrating the need for a calendar revision: “The calendar is not a step you take, but rather a journey you engage on. Moreover, it is not one’s individual journey, but the path travelled by the earth around the Sun, while people simply calculate the duration of this journey... This is why the calendar needs revising just as too large a coat needs adjusting. Thus we, too, are now tailoring the ill-fitting calendar and adjusting the time to fit the Holy Father’s calculations and prevent any future mistakes, so that we may always observe the rules they established in 325 AD”,³⁰.

During the following years, a number of monastics of the Moldavian monasteries rejected the revised calendar, left their monasteries and settled in isolated, remote locations in the mountains. Such was the nun Gliga Maria, known as Magdalena who, according to her own declarations, left Văratice Monastery in 1926, as a protest against the calendar revision, and settled into the woods, sharing a hut with another nun³¹. The time’s newspapers, as well as the church publications, recorded from 1927 onwards the first actions taken by the Gendarmerie to placate the Old Calendarist agitators, and the intervention of authorities against some Old Calendar monks in the Mountains of Neamț, who were stirring the peasants in the nearby villages („Curentul” newspaper, October 1928)³².

³⁰ Idem, *Se schimbă calendarul [The Calendar Being Changed]*, article from September 12, 1924 published in “Glasul Monahilor [The Monastic Herald]” no. 1–6, 1923–1924. The periodical “Glasul Monahilor” published several articles on the calendar, demonstrating that revising it was opportune. See also the article “Să primim cu încredere îndreptarea calendarului ortodox [Let us readily accept the revision of the Orthodox calendar]” of September 26, 1924.

³¹ The National Archives of Romania, records of the General Inspectorate of the Gendarmerie, File no. 5/1936, f. 6–9.

³² *Un răzvrătit împotriva calendarului a ajuns în judecată [An Agitator Against the Calendar Brought Before the Court]*, “Biserica Ortodoxă Română” no. 4 (553), April 1927, p. 223: “He was charged with upsetting the order in the Church and stirring the people, even pretending to be a representative of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, sent to raise protests against the calendar revision. It also appears that he distributed manifestos to the people. He was tried and sentenced

We note that in Romania, the Penal Code of 1864 was still in effect: article 181 stipulated that “those who, by any of the means enumerated in art. 294 (*public speeches, shouting, public action, writings, drawings, engravings, slogans sold or displayed for sale, distributed to the public*), will directly incite insubordination to laws or the authorities, disregard for the dominant religion or the other religions, hatred or disdain towards the government” were punishable by one month to one year in prison, and by fines between 500 to 5,000 lei. Article 210 stipulated that “those who prevent any denomination or cause it to delay, or discontinue, its observances by stirring unrest, either in the places of worship or in any other locations, are punishable by 15 days up to one month in prison and fines ranging from 26 up to 200 lei”³³.

A major role in the propagation of the Old Calendarist movement during the interwar period was played by the opportunistic behaviour of political parties. As the universal suffrage was introduced by amending the Constitution in 1917, peasantry became the most numerous pool of voters, amounting to 80% of Romania’s population. The opposition parties sought success by attempting to attract the minority groups, among them the Old Calendarists. The developments in the political realm fuelled the impression that the revision of the calendar was a temporary measure, a makeshift solution to be applied or abolished as dictated by the circumstances, which encouraged the resistance of monastics who had left their monasteries and caused unrest.

During the election campaign of 1926, Partidul Poporului [the People’s Party] headed by General Alexandru Averescu had promised to re-instate the old calendar. The People’s Party was the leading political group in postwar Romania, with local branches across the entire country, and thus very influential³⁴. Moreover,

in accordance with articles 181 and 210 in the Penal Code”; *Ibidem*, p. 253 “Călugărițe împotriva calendarului [Nuns Against the Calendar]” („At the convent in Tabăra Village, Orhei County, protests against the calendar broke out when a new priest was installed. The nuns, who observe the unrevised calendar, refused to open the church. The authorities have launched an inquiry”).

³³ The Penal Code was promulgated and published on October 30, 1864 and became effective on May 1, 1865, and was subsequently amended several times. Text available at: <http://freelex.juridic.ro/DocumentView.aspx?DocumentId=40035>

³⁴ In 1920, People’s League [Liga Poporului] from which emerged the People’s Party [Partidul Poporului], was rapidly restructured and merged with a branch of the Peasants’ Party in Bessarabia, headed by Sergiu Niță, and with a group that had split from the Romanian National Party, headed by Octavian Goga; in the same year it merged with the fraction led by Doru Popovici, which had split from the Democratic Unionist Party [Partidul Democrat al Unirii] in Bukovina (Ioan Scurtu, *Mit și realitate: Alexandru Averescu [Myth vs Reality: Alexandru Averescu]*, <http://www.ioanscurtu.ro/content/view/18/28/>)

under the Averescu government (March 30, 1926 – June 4, 1927), the Minister of Internal Affairs, Octavian Goga, issued a decree authorizing the province of Bessarabia to celebrate Easter according to the old calendar. As the times' newspapers showed, this decision caused much dissatisfaction among the high clergy which would not allow such an important matter to become "a matter of political speculation. Minister Goga asserted that the step he took had a provisional nature and that he believed it better to grant to the people complete freedom in this matter, until an ecumenical council issues a definitive resolution on the adoption, or rejection, of the new calendar by all the Orthodox churches. The minister's decree satisfied part of Bessarabia's population, which received what it had long been asking for, but placed the Church hierarchs in a difficult position, and their orders were ignored by the priests"³⁵.

In the Parliament debates, some deputies of the opposition parties supported the Old Calendarists. One of them was the Peasants' Party [Partidul Țărănesc] Deputy Dr. Nicolae Lupu, who published a leaflet entitled *Discurs parlamentar în chestiunea Paștelui* [*Parliamentary Discourse on the issue of Easter date*], greatly successful at the time³⁶. Interestingly, Dr. Lupu had caused a major crisis within the National Peasants' Party. Back in 1924, "Universul" newspaper had published a letter sent to Dr. Lupu by the "Presidency of the Peasant International", seen as "overwhelming evidence" of the connections between the Peasants' Party leader and the communist international. Actually, a few years later Dr. Lupu separated from the National Peasants' Party, and founded a left-wing dissident group which then adhered to the anti-fascist front, and in 1946 created the Democratic Peasants' Party [Partidul Țărănesc Democrat], which later joined the Romanian Communist Party³⁷.

An important moment in the evolution of the Old Calendarist movement was that of the Paschal celebrations of 1929. As early as 1928, the Holy Synod had decided that the 1929 Easter was to be celebrated on March 31, instead of May 5 – as indicated by the old Paschalion. However, because the Bessarabian church hierarchs Gurie Grosu, Metropolitan of Bessarabia (1928–1936), and

³⁵ Article *Dl. O. Goga în conflict cu Înalțul Cler* [*Mr O. Goga Comes into Conflict with the High Clergy*], "Cuvântul" newspaper, 8 April 1926.

³⁶ Dr. Lupu, *Discurs ținut în Ședința Camerei de la 7 martie 1929 în chestiunea Paștelui* [*Discourse Delivered in the Chamber Meeting of March 7, 1929 on the Matter of Easter*], Bucharest, 1929.

³⁷ The National Archives, records of the General Directorate of the Police, File 27/ 1936, Note 2180/July 23 1936, f. 176: "The communists are preparing demonstrations of sympathy to Dr. Lupu on his return to the country".

Visarion Puiu, Bishop of Hotin (1923–1935), spoke of the inconveniences of discontinuing the use of the old calendar, it was accepted that in Bessarabia Easter would be still celebrated according to the old calendar (on May 5). This generated heated debates in the times' publications, as on the one hand Easter according to the revised calendar occurred simultaneously with the Catholic Easter and before the Jewish Passover, and on the other hand a bizarre situation was created, whereby members of the same autocephalous church³⁸ celebrated Easter at different dates³⁹. Well-known intellectuals such as Nae Ionescu, Nichifor Crainic or Mircea Vulcănescu joined the debate⁴⁰.

The documents in the archives of the General Directorate of the Police record the fact that in 1929 Paschal celebrations generated unrest among the Orthodox Christians, especially in the villages of Moldavia – on both sides of the Prut River (the Old Kingdom, respectively Bessarabia)⁴¹. Bukovina's General Security Inspectorate reported that several men of Văscăuți village conferred in the

³⁸ On February 4, 1925, the Holy Synod decided to elevate the Romanian Orthodox Church to the rank of Patriarchate and to raise the metropolitan primate to that of patriarch. The law for setting up the Patriarchate was promulgated on February 25, 1925, and on November 1, 1925, the enthronement of the first patriarch Miron Cristea (1925–1939) took place (<https://patriarhia.ro/vi-the-romanian-orthodox-church-after-1918-the-contemporary-period--5693-en.html>)

³⁹ See several articles published in "Glasul Monahilor": *O primejdie [Danger]* (June 24, 1928); *Sfântul Sinod și calendarul [The Holy Synod and the Calendar]* (July 1, 1928); *De agitațiune avea Biserica nevoie? [Was Agitation Needed in the Church?]* (September 2, 1928). "The Holy Easter cannot be celebrated at two different dates within the same Church. If Transylvania and Bukovina want to celebrate Easter together with the faithful of other denominations who live alongside them, then let them do so, but do not force everyone to do the same"; *Data Paștilor și îndatoririle Guvernului [Easter Date and the Government's Duties]*, a speech delivered by Nicolae Iorga on 14 March in the plenary session of the Parliament and published in "Neamul românesc" newspaper, March 15, 1929; *Mari agitații în Basarabia pe tema Paștelor [Great Agitations in Bessarabia about Easter]*, "Neamul românesc", February 2, 1929; Acad. Nicolae Iorga, *Cearța pentru Paști [Dissensions over Easter Date]*, in "Neamul Românesc pentru popor", XVII, 1929, no. 9, May 1, p. 147.

⁴⁰ Constantin Mihai, *Biserica și elitele intelectuale interbelice [The Church and the Interwar Intellectual Elites]*, Institutul European, 2010 (chapter "Problema Pascală (1928–1929) [The Paschal Issue]", pp. 27–41).

⁴¹ In the inter-war period, the Old Kingdom was the appellation for the core of the Romanian state as formed as a result of the Great Union of 1918. It designated the historical Romanian territories of Moldavia (only its western part) and Wallachia. These territories had been unified in 1859 („the Little Union”) and formed the state of Romania who became a Kingdom in 1881. So, the Old Kingdom is the Romanian state before 1918, without Transylvania, Bessarabia and Bukovina. The historical Romanian province Moldavia is divided into two parts by the river Prut. The eastern part, known as Bessarabia, became a part of the Russian Empire between 1812–1918, returned to Romania between 1918–1940, and finally, after the Second World War, became a Soviet Republic. Today, this eastern part of the historical Romanian province forms the Independent Republic of Moldova.

local pub about how to prevent the population from celebrating Easter according to the revised calendar; the General Security Inspectorate of Cluj reported that in Miclăuși Village – Careii Mari, a group of eighty persons marched along the streets, shouting “Down with the priests, long live disorder!” The same Inspectorate announced that the dwellers of several villages were agitating for the Easter to be celebrated on May 5 instead of March 31, as decided by the Holy Synod⁴². On March 24, a numerous group of villagers from Pârlita, Iași County, locked the church, seized the keys and prevented the priest from officiating the service⁴³. The Security Inspectorate of Piatra Neamț reported incidents in Measteacăn Village, Neamț County, where the gendarmes were informed that a villager was hosting a monk invited to celebrate the Paschal service according to the old calendar. The authorities attempted to break into the house, in order to question him, and a fight occurred between peasants and gendarmes. The monk’s name was Dascălu Gavriil, who had been expelled from Neamț Monastery⁴⁴.

“Cuvântul” newspaper of January 9, 1929 announced that in Bessarabia were circulating manifestos reading: “those who adhere to the Gregorian Paschalion and the Catholic calendar, be they clergy or laypeople, shall be anathema! Let them never rot after they die, and be in hell forever”. It is a significant fact that the priests of Soroca, summoned by the county’s prefect and announced that they had to celebrate the religious service according to the revised calendar, refused to do so and stated that they would only celebrate the Lord’s Resurrection on May 5, and even signed a declaration to this effect (on March 28, 1929). The General Security Inspectorate reported that in the major towns of Bessarabia (Chișinău, Orhei, Tighina, Cahul), the Paschal service was officiated according to the revised calendar only in the military churches, by the army chaplains⁴⁵.

As these documents mention, between 1928–1929 certain monks who had left their monasteries or had been expelled for disciplinary reasons, settled in villages and there they established prayer houses. They turned the people against the Orthodox priests, by telling them that calendar revision was aimed at driving them away from the faith and forcibly converting them to Catholicism. One such agitator was Gamaliil Papil, expelled from monasticism in 1924 because of his

⁴² The National Archives, records of the General Directorate of the Police, File 46/ 1929: Note 1245/March 18 1929, f. 4, Notes 1452 and 1453/March 31 1929, f. 12–13.

⁴³ Idem, File 43/ 1929: Note 1385/March 25 1929, 13.

⁴⁴ Idem, File 46/ 1929, Note 1983/April 29 1929, f. 15.

⁴⁵ The National Archives, records of the General Directorate of the Police, File no. 43/1929, f. 12, 13, 18, 20.

immoral life, drinking, and disobedience to the rules of monastic life. Another was monk Pletosu, removed from Slatina Monastery in 1930 “for misbehaviour”⁴⁶.

In 1931, “Mitropolia Moldovei [The Metropolis of Moldavia]” review announced the defrocking of the former monks or hieromonks who had been expelled from monasticism “for misbehaving and agitation against the revised calendar”⁴⁷. By the Metropolitan Synod’s decision no. 5754/ September 22 1930, eleven persons were definitively expelled from monasticism, among them David Bidașcu, Gamaliil Papil, and Glicherie Tănase of Cetățuia Monastery. The statement released by the Metropolis of Moldavia declared that “they are all definitively deposed from the holy orders, and defrocked. They no longer have the right to wear the monastic vestments, or to celebrate any religious services, either in churches or in the homes of Christians, or any other place”. Other former monks received the same punishment, for instance Eustatie Andreescu who was defrocked and expelled from monasticism by the decision of the Court of Abbots and Archimandrites in the Eparchy of Ungro-Vlachia, on May 24, 1934⁴⁸.

With the support of politicians and lawyers, the Old Calendarists organized themselves as legally founded charity associations, such as the Religious Association “The Holy Apostles Peter and Paul” of Zănești-Neamț Village (August 30, 1930), with former archimandrite Eustație Andreescu as president, and Old Calendarist members recruited from the villages of Zărnești, Roznov, Săvinești, Mesteacăn, Borlești, Rediu (Appendix 3)⁴⁹.

The Old Calendarists also succeeded in building churches, without any construction licenses, thus breaching Article 24 in the *Law for the General Functioning of the Religious Denominations* of 1928, as well as Article 175 which stipulated that no church could be built without the blessing of the metropolitan and the local bishop, and without a license issued by the state authorities⁵⁰. Among the most important such places of worship, constructed

⁴⁶ The National Archives, records of the Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Arts, File no. 125/1935, f. 182.

⁴⁷ “Mitropolia Moldovei”, April 1931, pp. 122–123.

⁴⁸ The National Archives, records of the Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Arts, File no. 125/1935, f. 77.

⁴⁹ The National Archives, records of the Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Arts, File no. 125/1935, f. 40 (memorandum submitted by Eustatie Andreescu to the Ministry of Religious Affairs on 28 March 1935); On this association, *Idem*, File no. 1 bis/ 1954, f. 44.

⁵⁰ On the Law of Religious Denominations of 1928, see Ovidiu Bozgan, *Politică și Biserică în România Mare [Politics and Church in Greater Romania]*, “Dosarele Istoriei” journal no. 11 (2003), p. 44–52.

during the respective period, are those of Rădășeni-Suceava, Brusturi-Neamț, Vânători, Bălțătești, Podoleni, Rozvov, General Averescu, Zănești-Neamț⁵¹. These places of worship, as well as others, were “consecrated” by defrocked hieromonks such as Glicherie Tănase and others.

It is important to note that in February 1933, the Orthodox priests in Neamț and Fălțiceni counties addressed the Patriarch of Jerusalem, demanding to know whether he supported the Old Calendarist movement, as its supporters claimed. The Patriarch of Jerusalem answered on March 8 1933: “I have received and read your letter of February 5, in which you write of the unrest in your parishes, stirred by uneducated monks who take advantage of the ignorance and openness of the pious Romanian people, over the replacement of the old calendar with the new one, in the year 1924. I answer that I have been greatly upset and troubled about such rumours, spread among the devout Romanian people, against the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church, and I declare to you that the Orthodoxy of the Romanian Church has never been contested by the other Orthodox patriarchs and especially by the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, and that the Holy Synod is free to act and to command as supreme authority in the Church, making any decision that does not contradict the decrees of the Ecumenical Councils; and the devout Romanian people must piously and without dissent, receive its commands”⁵².

II.2. The Old Calendarist Movement between 1934–1936

Until 1934, the Old Calendarist movement did not undertake coordinated, unitary actions. As mentioned above, some of the monks expelled from their monasteries appointed themselves as leaders of the resistance against the revised calendar, creating unrest in certain villages of Moldavia. However, their actions were isolated and the Old Calendarist leaders often came into conflict. However, after 1934, the Old Calendarist movement organized around the newly-built prayer houses and chapels. To feel safer, the Old Calendarists began to reinforce and secure

⁵¹ The National Archives, records of the General Directorate of Police Iași, File no. 41/1933, Note 11210/May 24 1933.

⁵² The letter is quoted by Father Toma Gherasimescu, *Îndreptarea calendarului [The Revision of the Calendar]*, Tipografia Sfintei Episcopii a Hotinului, Bălți, 1936, pp. 21–22. Rev. Gherasimescu saw this letter, written in Greek and Romanian, and bearing the seal of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, in the house of the priest of Răucești-Neamț Village.

the prayer houses, by surrounding them with fences four to five meters tall, while their “priests” and “monks” were constantly guarded by forty to fifty armed men⁵³.

From 1935 onwards, Old Calendarists began to concern themselves with their legal status, both individual and collective. They enjoyed the support of renowned lawyers of the times, among them Codin Cernăianu⁵⁴, who assisted them in drafting their petitions and thus gaining some leverage in their relations with state authorities. The Old Calendarist adherents began sending notifications to the local mayors, announcing that they were leaving the Romanian Orthodox Church. One such example is the memorandum signed by a number of Orthodox Christians in Popești de Sus Village, Soroca County, who declared themselves to be members of the “Eastern Church” in that village (Appendix 4). In 1935, 140 families of Pucești-Putna presented a petition to King Carol II (1930–1940), requesting him to “endorse the presence of the religious community *The Dormition of the Theotokos*”⁵⁵.

Throughout the years 1934, 1935 and 1936, aggressive propaganda was carried out in favor of the old calendar. In general, the Orthodox priests in the villages with strong Old Calendarist organizations lost their authority, and some of them, according to the Police reports, even received death threats⁵⁶. Generally, the authorities saw the Old Calendarist movement as a danger to the state security and to law and order, and monitored it as closely as they watched the communist party or the Iron Guard movement⁵⁷.

Regrettably, Old Calendarists’ fanaticism and the authorities’ inability to manage and defuse tensions, resulted in a number of incidents with dead and

⁵³ The National Archives, records of the Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Arts, File no. 125/1935, f. 38, 49.

⁵⁴ Codin Cernăianu was married to the cousin of Elena Lupescu, the mistress of King Carol II. He converted to Catholicism around 1940, and was the disciple and collaborator of Marin Theodorian Carada, a well-known journalist and writer of the interwar period. He provided legal assistance to Old Calendarists, to the so-called “tudoristi” (supporters of defrocked priest Tudor Popescu), Jehovah’s Witnesses, as well as clergy members rebelling against church discipline. It appears that he had earned a reputation for blackmailing Orthodox hierarchs and clergy members, speculating on the failings of some eparchial centers, or of some hierarchs, and that he was “behind all scandals and incorrect dealings in the Church life of the last 50 years” (the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Research Department, File no. 1 bis/1954, f. 7).

⁵⁵ The National Archives, records of the Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Arts, File no. 125/ 1935, f. 21–22.

⁵⁶ The National Archives, records of the General Directorate of the Police, File no. 54/1936, f. 32, “Mișcarea stilistă [The Old Calendarist Movement]”, report dated September 21 1936.

⁵⁷ The National Archives, records of the General Directorate of the Police, File no. 49/1935, f. 32.

injured persons among both the Old Calendarists and the constabulary. The *Law for Repressing Crimes Against Public Order*, known as *Mârzescu Law*, which had been passed in 1924, abolished the extremist parties and organizations. In accordance with this law, the Romanian Communist Party was banned on April 6, 1924⁵⁸. In 1933, the Minister of Internal Affairs, G.G. Mironescu, issued a bill aimed to amend *Mârzescu Law*. The articles it proposed declared the following activities to be crimes: propaganda for creating subversive groups, associations or association branches, attending unauthorized events and marches, calls for rebellion, barricadings, illegal carrying of weapons or illegal wearing of uniforms.

It is worth mentioning that, despite the restrictive legislation, Old Calendarists took advantage of an order issued by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, according to which the Gendarmerie could not intervene in religious matters (no. 2956/March 29 1935), which to a certain degree accounts for their defiance towards state authorities. The documents available indicate that the most violent incidents involving the Old Calendarists and the gendarmes took place in the villages of Topărăști-Vaslui, Cucova-Tecuci, Târgu Neamț, as well as the Bessarabian village of Albineț.

A “massive rebellion”, as the Gendarmerie documents describe it, occurred in July 1934 in Toporăști-Vaslui, on the consecration of the prayer house dedicated to “The Holy Apostles Peter and Paul”; its leader was the defrocked priest Mihail Toma from Iași⁵⁹. The gendarmes, who intended to question the priest, met with the hostility of the Old Calendarists who defended him by stationing a round-the-clock, 40-men guard who opposed the authorities. On July 9, 1934, a gendarmerie unit attempted to seize Mihail Toma. In the mayhem, both parties fired gunshots and the incident left three Old Calendar adherents dead and twelve more injured. Four gendarmes were also wounded⁶⁰. On July 12, following these events, about one thousand Old Calendarists, most of them women and children, left for the town of Fălțiceni and picketed the county prefect’s office, in front of

⁵⁸ *Codul penal și legiurile complementare recente cuprinzând un număr de 25 de legi și regulamente din anii 1921–1932* [The Penal Code and Complementary Laws Including 25 Laws and Regulations Issued Between 1921–1932], Bucharest, 1933, pp. 540–555. *Mârzescu Law* was one of the most modern regulations of the times, as proves the fact that it was maintained until 2000, when it was abrogated by Government Ordinance no. 26/2000 concerning associations and foundations.

⁵⁹ The National Archives, records of the General Directorate of the Gendarmerie, File no. 15/1935, f. 52–70.

⁶⁰ The National Archives, records of the General Directorate of the Police, File no. 43/1934, f. 14 (Note no. 1624/July 10 1934).

which they officiated religious services, thus challenging the authorities⁶¹. Later, having received a subpoena from the authorities, the priest turned himself in and the Galați Prefecture remitted him to the Gendarmes.

Another regrettable incident occurred in 1935, when the Old Calendarists of Putna, Bacău and Tecuci decided to build a place of worship in Cucova Village. On May 27, 1935, the Gendarmerie Colonel Chihaiia and Prosecutor Tomița travelled to Cucova in order to open an inquiry into the assaults against the mayor and the gendarmes, perpetrated by Old Calendarists. There they found that the Old Calendarists had barricaded themselves inside the prayer house. In the ensuing fight, five people lost their lives and twenty eight others were severely wounded. About forty persons were seized to be interrogated. According to colonel Chihaiia's report, the prayer house had been fortified, and the Old Calendarist priest could only be found after a thorough search: "we saw that an area of about twenty five by twenty meters, at the western end of the village, was fenced off with boards two and a half meters tall, topped with barbed wire... As we searched, we found the so-called priest armed with an axe, and hiding inside a pit concealed from view by a barrel"⁶².

Another incident worth mentioning took place at Plumbuita-Ilfov, in 1935. According to the documents in possession of the Gendarmerie, there dwelt a group of Old Calendarists who were building a place of worship on the plot of land owned by one of them. On November 2, 1935, the head of Săulești constabulary went there together with nine gendarmes, in order to put an end to the illegal construction works. However, the Old Calendarists (thirty-four persons), "did not only refuse to comply, but even attacked the gendarmes, striking them and attempting to disarm them, so that they were forced to withdraw in order to avoid bloodshed, as it had happened elsewhere"⁶³.

A serious incident occurred in September 1936, when a crowd of Old Calendarists of Neamț and Baia counties assembled and marched together to Piatra Neamț, in order to set free the Old Calendarist priests Pamvu and Andreescu, whom they believed to have been arrested and detained in this town's penitentiary.

⁶¹ *Ibidem*, f. 15 (Note no. 1563/July 13 1934).

⁶² The National Archives, records of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Directorate of Studies, File no. 1/ 1945, f. 27–28. See also the article "Încăierare cu stiliștii într-o comună din județul Putna. Doi morți și șapte răniți [Violent Struggles Against Old Calendarists in a Village in Putna County. Two Dead, Seven Wounded]" („Universul” newspaper, May 29, 1935).

⁶³ The National Archives, records of the Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Arts, File no. 125/1935, f. 59–63.

“Universul” newspaper, in the article entitled “O provocare a Old Calendaristslor din nordul Moldovei [A challenge from Old Calendarists in northern Moldavia]” (the issue of Wednesday, September 16, 1936), announced that on the previous Sunday (September 13, 1936) the Old Calendarist church in Buhalnița Village had been consecrated. After the service, around 150 carts descended along Bistrița Valley, heading for Piatra Neamț.

The authorities, led by the prefect, the chief prosecutor and the commanding officer of the gendarmes detachment, met them at the town’s entrance. The Old Calendarist group stopped twenty kilometers outside the town, and sent a delegation to inform the authorities that they had come in such large numbers in order to “demand satisfaction”, unless their leaders were released⁶⁴. The Old Calendarists were carrying banners reading: *Long live the true Christian religion of the Old Calendarists!* and *Down with the authorities!*. The prosecutor allowed them ten minutes to drop their banners and leave quietly. At that moment, according to “Universul”, “Old Calendarist Gh. Moșneagu of Boroaia Village attacked the police commander and struck him. Then the Old Calendarists all rushed forwards, shouting “death to the authorities!”, and threw stones at the chief prosecutor. Many other soldiers and constables were also hit and injured. Then the rebels began to shoot, encouraged by the famous “Bishop” Glicherie who was among them. He was disguised as a woman”.

Following the incident of Piatra Neamț, 194 Old Calendarist agitators were seized, and following investigations fifty men and twenty women were arrested, while Glicherie was sent to Bucharest to be tried by a court of law⁶⁵. Among those arrested was “the Old Calendarist nun Alexandrina b. Cheriloaia” who declared that she had adhered to the Old Calendarist movement in 1934 and that during the events of Piatra Neamț she had acted as “guard for the former bishop Glicherie”⁶⁶.

I could not find any archive documents recording the activity of Glicherie Tănase since his defrocking in 1931, until he was acknowledged by Old Calendarists as their leader in 1934–1935. It is only known that after 1934, he received several court sentences for “illegal wearing of priestly vestments”: on January 29, 1934 (sentenced to three months in prison), June 13, 1934 (sentenced to three months

⁶⁴ The National Archives, records of the General Directorate of the Police, Note 2681/September 5 1936; note 2683/ September 6 1936.

⁶⁵ The National Archives, records of the General Directorate of the Police, File no. 54/1936, f. 33 („Mișcarea stilistă [The Old Calendarist Movement]”, report dated September 21 1936).

⁶⁶ The National Archives, records of the General Directorate of the Gendarmerie, File no. 5/1936, f. 1–5 (the dossier of the Old Calendarist nun Alexandrina).

in prison together with David Bidașcu), respectively May 4, 1935 (sentenced to one month in prison)⁶⁷. In October 1935 he received another ninemonth sentence. According to the information provided by the Orthodox priest of Răucești Village, before being imprisoned, Glicherie announced to his followers that he was leaving for Jerusalem in order to be ordained a bishop there. Thus, on his return, he made a triumphal entry into Boroaia Village, where flowers were thrown at his feet⁶⁸. The Old Calendarist official history states that “the venerable Glicherie left for the Holy Mount Athos in 1935 via Serbia. He intended to persuade one of the bishops who observed the Julian calendar to come to Romania and ordain him as a bishop. Due to unfavorable circumstances met in Athens, Belgrade, Budapest and Vienna, he returned to the country”⁶⁹.

On August 2, 1936 a great assembly of the Old Calendarists took place in Baia and Neamț counties, the ones where Glicherie had proclaimed himself as “bishop of the Old Calendarists in Moldavia”. He immediately proceeded to work in his “eparchy”, consecrating plots of land on which churches would be erected, and blessing processions. He performed the first such “consecration” in Răucești Village, Neamț County (on August 7). According to the declarations of the Orthodox priest of Răucești, Glicherie had stated: “In the autumn there will be a general congress of all Eastern Christians observing the old calendar in the country. You all must attend, and raise much money so that we may dispatch a delegation to Bucharest, to clarify the issue of our episcopacy. I think we are going to have our own bishopric, but much money is needed, for a bishop and a bishopric cannot come at a low cost. Priests are greedy, they have their salaries, their own plots of land, their income from people’s donations. Down with the priests, down with the heretical bishops, down with the new calendar!”, everyone present began to shout with him.

In 1936, an anti-Old Calendarist brochure was published by Grigore Spîru, who showed that Glicherie and his acolytes were leading an immoral life, “at the expense of the fanatical people whom they deceive and take advantage of”⁷⁰.

⁶⁷ The National Archives, records of the Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Arts, File no. 125/1935, f. 115, 116, 117.

⁶⁸ Article by Pr. D. Săvescu of Răucești, Neamț, *Stilismul își începe iarăși activitatea [Old Calendarism Resumes its Activity]*, “Universul” newspaper, September 27 1936.

⁶⁹ “Catacombele Ortodoxiei” (The Catacombs of Orthodoxy) the official publication of the “The Old Calendar Orthodox Church” journal, no. 2/May 1999 (<http://www.catacombeortodoxiei.ro/index.php/lacasuri-de-cult/1228.html>).

⁷⁰ *Dezvăluirea unor senzaționale excrocherii: Rasputinul Moldovei. Glicherie Diavolul Sfânt, “episcopul” stiliștilor [Stunning Frauds Exposed: Moldavia’s Rasputin. Glicherie, the “Holy Devil”]*, f.a (registered with the Library of the Academy in 1936).

The author, who declared he had conducted a personal inquiry into the “Old Calendarist camps” of Vânători and Rădășeni, asserted that Glicherie, being expelled from his monastery, was hosted in the house of forester Ion Gârleanu of Târgu Neamț. Soon, he fell in love with the forester’s daughter, Maria, and the two had an affair. This episode was also documented by the Orthodox priest of Brusturi-Neamț Village, Niculae Gheorghe, who added that the forester’s daughter had become pregnant and had an abortion in Iași with the help of the communist leader Ana Pauker (1893–1960) and that she later joined an Old Calendarist convent receiving the name of Glicheria⁷¹.

II.3. The Old Calendarist Movement in Bessarabia

The most serious problems related to the calendar were certainly faced in Bessarabia, where the political-ecclesiastical situation differed to a certain extent from that of the Old Kingdom. The tsarist rule had imprinted a Russophile character on the Church in this age-old Romanian province. The vast majority of the churches had paintings of saints of the Russian Church, as well as inscriptions in Slavonic language⁷². Priests were ordained by Russian bishops, while the intellectuals were educated in Russian schools and some of them were even Russified. Moscow, making great efforts to preserve the idea of the unity of the Russian Empire within its old borders, was interested in maintaining the Russophile character of the Church of Bessarabia, with the old calendar as one of the key elements of this policy.

On the other hand, today’s historians appreciate that the attempts at integrating Bessarabia into the economic, social, political and religious life of Romania was

⁷¹ Archives of the State Secretariat for Religious Affairs, *Raport asupra stilismului în BOR de la înființare până în prezent [Report on the Old Calendarism in the Romanian Orthodox Church, Since its Emergence to the Present]*, July 8, 1985 (4 pages); The Patriarchate Administration Archives, “Metropolitan Glicherie” (file dated 1982, page 1). Glicheria is also mentioned in the official history written by Constantin Bujor: “It was also known that many devout women, who sought the spiritual guidance of father Glicherie, gave up secular life and embraced monasticism, establishing the first Old Calendarist convents. Such is the case of the daughter of Mr Gârleanu of Tg. Neamț, who used to be a teacher at one of the town’s schools, but renounced her situation and social standing and left for Jerusalem, where she received the great schema by the name of Glicheria” (Constantin Bujor, *65 de ani de persecuție a Bisericii Ortodoxe Române de stil vechi (oct. 1924-dec 1989) [65 Years of Persecutions Against the Old Calendar Romanian Orthodox Church]*, Schimbarea la Față Publishing House, 1998, p. 25).

⁷² “Glasul Monahilor [Monastic Herald]” review published a memorandum sent by a Bessarabian Christian to Metropolitan Gurie, stating that sixteen years after the Great Union, some churches and monasteries venerated Russian saints, instead of the saints much revered in Romania such as Saint Demetrios, Saint Paraskevi, or Saint Philothea (no. 11/1933).

a near failure, and this Romanian province did not enjoy the attention it deserved and did not receive any administrative reform based on the principle of local self-management.

The canonical and administrative situation of the Church of Bessarabia, regulated by the Pastoral Charter of June 16, 1918, continued to be discussed in many meetings of the Holy Synod. One of the hotly debated issues was the unilateral decision of the Bessarabian clergy to place the assets of the Bessarabian Church in the possession of a society named “Uniunea Clerului Ortodox din Basarabia [The Union of the Orthodox Clergy in Bessarabia]” (June 30, 1922). In the meeting of December 16, 1922, the Holy Synod decided that the general administration of the churches within the Archbishopric of Bessarabia must be governed by the local norms sanctioned and approved by the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church, completed by the provisions of the Pastoral Charter, and therefore rejected this alienation of property and wealth. Over the following years, there was a silent struggle between the Bessarabian clergy – who repeatedly and systematically ignored the decisions of the Holy Synod – and the Romanian Orthodox Church⁷³.

The documents I have examined show that most of the population of Bessarabia did not comply with the decision of the Orthodox Church to revise the calendar. On the feast days according to the revised calendar, the people would go to work in the fields instead of attending the church, while on the feast days according to the old calendar any activities would cease and the villages were in celebration. An important role in maintaining this passive resistance was played by the Innocentist movement [„inochentism”], very influential in Bessarabia at the time, which rejected the revised calendar⁷⁴. A decisive role was also played by the anti-revisionist stance of some reputable intellectuals such as Iustin Frățiman – the president of the Orthodox Christians’ Committee [Comitetul Creștinilor Orto-

⁷³ See: *Dezbaterile Congresului Național Bisericesc. Sesiunea ordinară din octombrie 1926 [The Debates of the National Ecclesiastical Congress. The Ordinary Session of October 1926]*, Bucharest, 1926, pp. 63–65. This issue had been also discussed in the Holy Synod’s meeting of February 24, 1924, which had decided to entrust the administration of church estates and wealth to an administrative trust, where the trustees were the bishops of the three Bessarabian dioceses.

⁷⁴ On Innocentism: Archim. Grigorie L. Botoșăneanu, *Inochentismul*, “Biserica Ortodoxă Română”, year XLVI no. 9 (570), September 1926, pp. 679–774; N. Popovschi, *Mișcarea de la Balta [The Balta Movement]*, Chișinău, 1926; *O stare de lucruri îngrijorătoare și mijloacele de a o înlătura [A Worrisome Situation and How to Tackle It]*, “Mitropolia Moldovei”, March 1931, pp. 53–58.

docși], who repeatedly expounded his opinions against the revised calendar⁷⁵. The old calendar cause was also championed by political parties, as shown above, because many of their members carried out Old Calendarist propaganda⁷⁶.

The Old Calendarist movement in Basarabia was always in touch with its counterpart in the Old Kingdom. A Police report dated from 1935 stated that two citizens of the Bessarabian village Albineț (Ion Pietraru and Alexei Scalatiki), had contacted Glicherie Tănase and requested him to send an Old Calendarist priest. Glicherie proposed Monk Irimia Pletosu, who was however willing to travel there only on condition that the villagers provide a place of worship and guards to protect him against an intervention of the authorities. Soon, Ion Pietraru's house was turned into a house of prayer, also offering accommodation for the monk. Voluntary donations were used to buy icons, liturgical books and other liturgical items, while the building was surrounded by a tall fence, like a fortress. Two metal semantrons were installed in the yard, in order to alert the whole village if anything happened. On June 26, 1935, Pletosu held a meeting in Singureni Village, attended by about four hundred Old Calendarists. In his speech, he urged them to take action, to demolish the Orthodox churches and oppose the authorities, even at the cost of their own lives, if the state attempted to prevent them from building Old Calendarist churches. From then on, according to the Police reports, the villagers' religious vehemence was manifest openly, and people from the neighbouring villages began to attend their services⁷⁷.

Albineț-Bălți in Bessarabia became a major Old Calendarist hub. During the year 1935, most villagers had submitted requests to leave the Romanian Orthodox Church in order to join Old Calendarism. According to the documents held by the prefecture of Bălți, on June 13, 1935, their number was as high as 1,368.

⁷⁵ The National Archives, records of the General Directorate of the Police, File no. 54/1936 f. 3 (*Mișcarea stilistă de la începuturi până în prezent [The Old Calendarist Movement from its Beginnings to the Present]*, report dated October 29 1936; Frățiman was the president of the *Orthodox Christians' Committee* in Bessarabia, an alumnus of the Institute of Archaeology of Sankt Petersburg University, History-Philology section (1910), a professor of classical languages at the theological seminaries in Pskov, Liscok, Olonets, Pinsk, a founder of the History Society B.P. Hașdeu in Chișinău, the author of several works on the history of Romanians in the Russian Empire, and a correspondent member of the Romanian Academy since 1919 (Dorina Rusu, *Membrii Academiei Române (1866–1999) [Members of the Romanian Academy (1866–1999)]*, Editura Academiei Române, 1999, pp. 200–201).

⁷⁶ The National Archives, records of the General Directorate of the Police, File no. 41/1933, Note 10980/May 22 1933, the General Directorate of Cernăuți Police, page 22.

⁷⁷ Idem, File no. 49/1935, f. 42.

The prefect's office issued a statement in this context: "Old Calendarists are free to split from the Orthodox Church, but they cannot declare themselves to be adherents to an Old Calendarist denomination, as there is no such denomination. The calendar does not constitute a denomination... Our Constitution and the law concerning the organization of the Orthodox Church do not allow any collective practice of the Orthodox worship other than the official worship conducted by the Orthodox Church"⁷⁸. Old Calendarists also petitioned the prefect, asking him to remove the mayor who no longer endorsed them, and requesting to have their own, separate church and priest, a separate graveyard, a new baptism to be performed for all children having been baptized over the last ten years, and the re-consecration of the graves of those persons buried during the "new-style calendar" (a handful of dust was taken from each grave and was consecrated/ blessed)⁷⁹.

During Eastertide in 1935, a well-known Old Calendarist agitator arrived in Albineț Village. It was the priest, Father Nicolae Climovici, a Russian holding Romanian citizenship, who had stirred several incidents in Bessarabia. During liturgical services, Father Climovici remembered among the dead Emperor Nicholas II of Russia, while responses were chanted in Russian, although Albineț village had an entirely Romanian population. Father Climovici had been ordained by Bishop Seraphim of Vienna and sent to Moldavia over the Prut River, at the request of the *Union of the Russian Minorities in Romania* which actively advocated the maintaining of the old calendar in Bessarabia. "This association – a Police report stated – has no religious goals but purely political ones, aiming to cause dissent in the province across the Prut"⁸⁰.

From Albineț, Father Climovici was leading the Old Calendarist demonstrations in the neighbouring villages. On March 30, 1935, he travelled to Ghingheni-Bălți where he officiated a religious service, then gave a speech in front of a large audience of hundreds of people, whom he urged not to obey the Orthodox priests who "receive a salary from the state and also rob people by demanding money from them, while he is a martyr of the faith and is sentenced to prison, and now has no money to appeal the court". The crown collected money as well

⁷⁸ The National Archives, records of the Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Arts, File no. 125/1935, f. 79.

⁷⁹ The National Archives, records of the General Directorate of the Police, File no. 54/1936 f. 13–15 (*Mișcarea stilistă de la începuturi până în prezent*, Report dated October 29 1936).

⁸⁰ The National Archives, records of the General Directorate of the Police, File no. 54/1936, f.5 („Mișcarea stilistă de la începuturi până în prezent”, October 29 1936).

as other donations, so that Father Climovici left with four fully-loaded carts⁸¹. The Gendarmerie documents recorded that on May 18, 1935, Father Climovici met with the Old Calendarist leaders of the villages where the movement had places of worship, and decided to occupy the mainstream, Orthodox churches on a working day, and if opposed to attack, even at the cost of bloodshed⁸².

On the night of June 17, 1935, a meeting was held at Albineţ and concluded with the Old Calendarist believers signing the minutes and a declaration under oath, stating that they were ready to defend their cause at any cost, even to death. On June 21, hundreds of Old Calendarist believers arrived at Albineţ from the neighbouring villages, bringing gifts and money to donate for the church under construction in that village, where they intended to establish the Old Calendarist bishopric and also to bring in monks from the Old Kingdom (specifically, Wallachia and Moldavia)⁸³.

The authorities issued an arrest warrant for Climovici to be seized “immediately”, and sent the warrant to the Gendarmes unit of Făleşti Village, on July 2, 1935. However, Climovici refused to surrender himself to the gendarmes and continued his Old Calendarist propaganda, citing an order issued by the Minister of Internal Affairs and addressed to the Commander of the Gendarmes Legion Baia, by which he recommended to the local authorities to operate tactfully and carefully, in order to avoid bloodshed (no. 2956/1935, published in “Apărarea Națională [National Defence]” newspaper of March 29, 1935). On August 16, a new Gendarmes lieutenant arrived at Făleşti and, noting the impossibility to apply the court’s decision on Climovici, decided to seize him by force during the night of August 18/19. However, the following day Old Calendarists were celebrating the Lord’s Transfiguration and thus hundreds of believers from the neighbouring villages had gathered in the church for the vigil, and some stayed after the service for confession.

When the gendarmes attempted to seize Climovici, the peasants defending him put up a fierce fight. Three Old Calendarist believers died in the turmoil and several persons were injured. Police reports mentioned that the Gendarmes lieutenant had acted “on his own initiative, out of excess of zeal”, in an attempt

⁸¹ The National Archives, records of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the General Directorate of the Police, Note 770/March 30 1936: “Old Calendarist Propaganda is Gaining Impetus in Bessarabia”.

⁸² The National Archives, records of the General Directorate of the Gendarmerie, File no. 25/1936, f. 103.

⁸³ *Ibidem*, f. 247.

to put an end to the Old Calendarist propaganda⁸⁴. As exhibited through the available police documents, as well the articles published by newspapers, the peasants guarding the priest were armed with guns, while the gendarmes were carrying rifles⁸⁵.

Following this serious incident, the Ministry of Internal Affairs ordered the gendarmes to avoid any involvement in the Old Calendarists' agitations, unless they received a written request to this effect from the part of the respective eparchies. At the same time, the order sought to restore the calm by arresting Climovici and other leaders of the movement, "or else this movement is going to gain impetus", and by stationing military forces in the village for a while, in order to restore the order⁸⁶. Climovici, the moral author of this incident, was sentenced for "wearing a (priestly) uniform illegally and insulting the Christian religion", punishable according to Article 181 in the Penal Code⁸⁷. However, he succeeded in avoiding arrest, fled and hid in the village of Drăgănești-Baia in the Old Kingdom, where he was constantly protected by a guard of thirty to forty Old Calendarists⁸⁸.

In the autumn of 1935, Glicherie Tănase arrived at Albineț. A General Directorate Police report mentioned "a certain Glicherie, priest and self-proclaimed bishop" who on September 20 had "consecrated" a church in the presence of thousands of people. "It was even rumoured that he intended to consecrate a monastery in Călinești Village and a chapel in Soci-Noi Village, then travel to Năvărneț Village and occupy the Orthodox church there, in order to re-consecrate it for the Old Calendarist movement"⁸⁹. Climovici was arrested only in early October 1936 and brought to Bucharest to be interrogated. The last mention of Climovici can be found in a Gendarmerie document dated 1941, stating that he had been transferred from Văcărești prison to the camp of Onești-Lăpușna⁹⁰.

⁸⁴ The National Archives, records of the General Directorate of the Police, File 49/ 1935, Note no. 12418/July 24 1935 of the Regional Inspectorate of Bessarabia Police; *Ibidem*, Note 13 861/August 19 1935.

⁸⁵ See the newspaper articles published in "Universul" no. 229/August 21 1935; "Dimineața" of August 22 1935; "Naționalul" no. 385/August 24 1935.

⁸⁶ The National Archives, records of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Directorate of Studies, File no. 1 bis/1954, pp. 38–39.

⁸⁷ The trial of agitator Old Calendarist priests, "Universul" of September 27, 1935.

⁸⁸ The National Archives, records of the General Directorate of the Police, File no. 54/1936 f. 5, Report dated October 29 1936 : *Mișcarea stilistă de la începuturi până în prezent*.

⁸⁹ The National Archives, records of the Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Arts, File no. 125/1935, f. 167.

⁹⁰ The National Archives, records of the General Directorate of the Gendarmerie, File no. 22/ 1944, f. 22.

II.4. Old Calendarism – a “threat to national security” and the reaction of state authorities

In relation to the incident of Albineț in 1935, “Universul” newspaper of August 22, 1936 was writing about Bishop Seraphim: “Nobody could have thought that this servant of the altar had a secret agenda, a special mission from those who sought to create abnormal situations in the Moldavian province between the Prut and the Dniester rivers. Since communist agitations met with the resistance of the Moldavian masses, so closely tied to the people and the ancestral land, they found an opportunity for creating unrest, in the matter of the revised calendar. This was the mission of Bishop Seraphim, who had set up in Bessarabia a true “factory” churning out priests – the most dangerous agitators whom he ordained...”.

The Russian Bishop Seraphim had been expelled from Bessarabia and settled in Vienna, which was an important center for communist propaganda. As early as 1926, the headquarters of the Communist Party had moved into this city, by the establishment of a “Political Bureau” for international affairs, which was entitled to make decisions on the activity of the Communist Party in Romania⁹¹. Bishop Seraphim declared himself to be an official delegate of the Russian Synod in the diaspora and of Metropolitan Antonie [Anthony] for Bessarabia. There he ordained priests to serve the “National Russian Church in Bessarabia”, choosing persons with no theological training and no formal education, and turning them into advocates of Old Calendarism. It is known that Father Climovici was summoned at Hotin Diocese in March 1935, in order to explain himself and his Old Calendarist propaganda he was conducting in Bessarabia, but he refused to go under the pretext that he had been ordained by Bishop Seraphim in Vienna, so he owed explanations and obedience only to this bishop⁹².

The same “Universul” newspaper asserted that the two incidents: that of Albineț in 1935 and that of Piatra Neamț in 1936, were but two aspects of the

⁹¹ After the victory of the Russian Communist Party in the Bolshevik Revolution of November 1917, the Bolsheviks believed that the next step towards their ultimate goal of universal communism required a new international to foment revolution in Europe and around the world. The third Communist International (Comintern) was set up in 1919, by Lenin. During its early period (1919–1924), known as the First Period in Comintern history, the Comintern was involved in the revolutions across Europe in this period, starting with the Hungarian Soviet Republic in 1919. In Romania, the Communist Party was set up in 1921, being affiliated to Comintern.

⁹² The National Archives, records of the General Inspectorate of the Gendarmerie, File no. 25/1936, f. 59.

communist activity in Romania⁹³. According to “Universul”, the communist action on the Old Calendarist front had created three categories of people: communist agitators; profiteers (runaway monks who had left their monasteries and now sought to take advantage of the situation); and unaware, manipulated believers turned fanatics. The Third International gave directions to the Old Calendarist leaders in Romania and instructed them to take advantage of the social unrest caused by the revised calendar, by encouraging peasants to oppose it. The many trials brought before military courts demonstrated the nefarious influence of communism. The Moldavian peasants of Bessarabia could be thus engaged in actions they believed to defend their ancestral faith. Directions from the Third International had the covert coordinators of the Old Calendarist movement in Romania work in such a way as to split part of the villagers from the Church, by promoting Moldavianism, as a sub-category of Pan-Slavism. Bishop Tit Simedrea of Hotin held the same opinion: during the pastoral conferences he delivered at Sorooca in the autumn of 1936, he showed that “stavrostylism” (Old Calendarism) was propagated by agents in the service of communism⁹⁴. On the contrary, the newspapers with communist sympathies, such as “Adevărul”, started a campaign in favour of the Old Calendarist monks who had been arrested and whom they portrayed as “martyrs of the faith”.

Regarding the connection between the Old Calendarist movement in the Old Kingdom, and the communist movement (then operating illegally), the Archives of the Patriarchate’s Administration hold some interesting documents attesting to communist leader Ana Pauker’s involvement in supporting Old Calendarism. One of them reads: “Ana Pauker, disguised as a nun at Brusturi and Teohari Georgescu, disguised as a hierodeacon in Rădășeni-Suceava Parish, both of them coming clandestinely from the other side of the Dniester, infiltrated Old Calendarist communities. They carried out communist propaganda among the Old Calendarists, assuring them that once the communists seized the power, they would compel the Romanian Orthodox Church to return to the Julian calendar. This is why many adherents to the Old Calendar movement joined the Communist Party and were

⁹³ Article entitled *Stilismul este o acțiune de instigație comunistă* [Old Calendarism is Instigated by the Communists], “Universul” newspaper, September 22 1936.

⁹⁴ The National Archives, records of the General Directorate of the Police, f. 32, Note 3021/October 13 1936; see also the article entitled *Calendarul îndreptat și propaganda rusă în Basarabia* [The Revised Calendar and Russian Propaganda in Bessarabia], published in “Cuvântul” newspaper, April 18 1926.

later persecuted by the Antonescu regime (1940–1944), which perceived them as communists”⁹⁵.

A report written by Nicolae Gheorghe, the parish priest of Brusturi Village, stated that Ana Pauker had met with Glicherie Tănase, at that time expelled from Neamț Monastery. Ana Pauker encouraged Glicherie to embrace the Old Calendarist cause, and promised him a great future. According to this report, the church in Brusturi Village was built with her financial support (she presented herself as a very wealthy widow from Bucharest, who wished to erect the church in the memory of her husband) and it was also her, together with Glicherie Tănase and Vasile Buzdea, who provided moral and material assistance to the rebellion of Piatra Neamț⁹⁶. The Orthodox priest of Brusturi Village added that after the war ended, Ana Pauker returned to Brusturi, and offered great amounts of money to fund the reconstruction of the church: “After the church of Brusturi was rebuilt, Vasile Buzdea saw that Old Calendarism was a profitable business that paid off and, as he had retired, became a cantor, took over the church, and drove Glicherie away”. Then Glicherie left for the vicinity of Fălticeni Village, located in Suceava County, where he later founded Slătioara Monastery.

It is known that during the interwar period, Ana Pauker came to Romania on three occasions, in order to organize the communist movement, and each time she was arrested as a “dangerous communist agitator”. She was first arrested in June 1925, then in April 1929 and July 1935, when she appeared before the court in the famous “trial of Craiova” (June 1936) and was charged, alongside other important members of the communist circles in Romania, with contacting “foreign associations in order to receive directions and subventions and prepare the grounds for the communist revolution in Romania”⁹⁷. Ana Pauker was released only in 1941, for an exchange of political detainees between Bucharest and Moscow. The Romanian government allowed Ana Pauker to travel to Moscow, in exchange for the return to Romania of Ion Codreanu, an old leader of the Romanian National Council in Bukovina.

⁹⁵ The Patriarchate Administration Archives, *Report* drawn up by His Grace Gherasim Hunedoreanul, Missionary Vicar Bishop of the Romanian Orthodox Church, on February 27, 1990.

⁹⁶ Archives of the State Secretariat for Religious Affairs, *Raport asupra stilismului în BOR de la înființare până în prezent [Report on Old Calendarism in the Romanian Orthodox Church from its Beginnings to the Present]*, July 8 1985 (4 pages).

⁹⁷ Stelian Tănase, *Clienții lu’ tanti Varvara [Auntie Barbara’s Clients]*, Humanitas, Bucharest, 2008, pp. 238–241 („tanti Varvara [Auntie Barbara]” was the code name used by communists to designate the secret police during their time as an illegal movement in Romania, 1924–1944).

Ana Pauker arrived for her third “visit” at the direct orders of Komintern, in order to reorganize the Romanian Communist Party, and she was to work in Romania through clandestine networks of spies and agents, paid from secret funds. She came together with around fifty activists and agents, bringing money to sustain the communists’ actions and to pay lawyers’ fees in the event of court trials. It is also known that in order to conceal her identity, Ana Pauker used the false name of Maria Grigoraș, and a fake identity document no. 34163/ 5732 issued by Piatra Neamț City Hall on October 15, 1934⁹⁸.

The information provided by the Orthodox priest of Brusturi, concerning the link between Ana Pauker and Glicherie Tănase, may be proved or disproved by further research into archive documents, but the contribution of communists (who at the time operated illegally) to promote Old Calendarism during the interwar period is worth investigating. It is not unlikely that Ana Pauker or other communist agents might have contacted the Old Calendarists and provided material or moral support to the latter’s acts of rebellion. Personally, I do not think it is a mere coincidence that the most serious incidents opposing the Old Calendarists to state authorities, which ended up with dead and injured persons, occurred between 1934–1936, when Ana Pauker and other communist agents were on the territory of Romania. Hopefully, further research into the documents held by the National Archives, especially the reports submitted and documents issued by the Police and Gendarmerie during the interwar period, will shed light on these important aspects of the emergence and evolution of the Old Calendarist movement.

It is certain that the Old Calendarist movement was monitored by the Romanian authorities across the country, just as the communist or Cuza (Legionary) movements were, and considered to be a matter of national security. The incidents of Albineț and Piatra Neamț demonstrated to authorities that Old Calendarist unrest could evolve into a movement “against the Romanian regime and the state order”⁹⁹. On September 20, 1936, a convoy of more than one hundred carts from Albineț

⁹⁸ Colonel Magistrat Cetate, *Conspirația comunistă în România și evreica Ana Pauker în fața Justiției Militare* [The Communist Conspiracy in Romania and the Jew Ana Pauker Facing the Military Court of Justice], 1941, p. 18. Cetate was Royal Head Commissary, head of the Military Court of Justice, and prosecutor in the case against the communists of Craiova. The same information is provided by archive documents: The National Archives, records of the General Directorate of the Police, file no. 24/1935, note 2424, f. 56.

⁹⁹ Mișcarea stilistă de la începuturi până în prezent (The Stilist Movement from the Beginning Till our Days), Police Report dated October 29, 1936, The National Archives, records of the General Directorate of the Police, File 54/1936, f. 3.

crossed the Prut River and headed for Baia-Neamț. In the following days, the Old Calendarist caravan was stopped at Iași, where the Police and Gendarmerie arrested several persons. According to the declarations of priests and monks who were interrogated, the caravan was heading for Brusturi where Glicherie Tănase had summoned Old Calendarists for a great congress to be held on September 21.

The authorities reacted very strongly from then on. The new Penal (Criminal) Code, known as “King Carol II Code”, had already come into force in March 1936 and stipulated harsh penalties for acts of rebellion against the administrative or judicial bodies or against public authorities, for “instigating disturbances and other crimes against public order”, for those who formed organizations “after the military model”, without authorization from the public authorities, and for crimes against religion¹⁰⁰. In late September 1936, the Gendarmerie visited all important Old Calendarist hubs, arrested the agitators, searched the houses of Old Calendarist believers and closed and sealed up their places of worship. According to the data provided by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the search conducted at Brusturi found weapons, bullets and grenades, as well as several objects that revealed the monks’ immoral conduct¹⁰¹.

By the Decree of the Council of Ministers no. 2617/November 4 1936, the Government confiscated the Old Calendarist churches and prayer houses. Also, the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Arts, by the Ministry’s decision no. 4781/April 21 1937, completely prohibited the activity of ten religious associations propagating ideas susceptible of leading to infringements of the state laws and affecting its institutions, with the Old Calendarist associations among them. This decision stipulated that “the administrative bodies and the police will close down their places of worship; will put an end to any propaganda or religious proselytism, be it done by preaching or by distributing brochures, journals etc. by the members of these banned religious associations; those who fail to comply with these administrative or police measures, will be sued and charged with disturbing the public order and breaching the laws for the state defense and security”.

The imprisoned Old Calendarist leaders and agitators served their sentences and were then placed at three remote, isolated sketes under the surveillance of

¹⁰⁰ Carol II’s Penal (Criminal) Code was promulgated by Royal Decree no. 471/March 17 1936 and published in “Monitorul Oficial [Official Gazette]” no. 65/March 12 1936.

¹⁰¹ Decision no. 4781 of 1937 banning the sects and religious associations. Published in the Official Gazette no. 93, part 1/April 21 1937.

gendarmes, as follows: at Iezeru Skete, Vâlcea County (eleven persons – among them Eustatiu Andreescu, Dumitru Bidașcu, Pamvu Hoisu), at Cheia Skete, Prahova County (fourteen persons), respectively Vărzărești Skete (thirty-two nuns)¹⁰².

Under the Antonescu regime (1940–1944), the “Old Calendarist” adherents were actually “united” or conflated with the Orthodox Church. By the Decision of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Arts no. 42352/September 9 1940, published in “Monitorul Oficial [Official Gazette]” no. 216/September 17 1940), the Romanian state acknowledged seven religious denominations, and stipulated explicitly that in addition to these “no other religious associations or sects can exist, as they are abrogated from the date of the present Decision, by law and as a state of fact”. Law 927/ 1942 („Monitorul Oficial [Official Gazette]” no. 305/ December 30 1942) abolished all religious associations and sects while their assets, financial resources as well as their archives became State property. Consequently, in the reports drawn up by the General Inspectorate of the Gendarmerie dating from the years 1942, and 1943 respectively, Old Calendarists are no longer mentioned under the heading “religious movements”¹⁰³.

¹⁰² The National Archives, records of the General Inspectorate of the Gendarmerie, File no. 22/ 1944.

¹⁰³ Idem, File 74/1942, respectively 112/1943.

III. OLD CALENDARISM DURING THE COMMUNIST PERIOD

III.1. The Old Calendarist movement during the early years of the communist regime (1945–1954)

In the aftermath of August 23 1944, one of the objectives pursued by the Ministry of Religious Affairs was to abrogate the measures imposed by Marshal Ion Antonescu, with regard to religious denominations. The Petru Groza government (1945–1952) was unusually “benevolent” to them, and declared its intention to restore the equal treatment of all denominations. This policy was both an electoral strategy for the upcoming elections of the autumn of 1946, and a way of keeping the Romanian Orthodox Church in check¹⁰⁴.

On August 3 1945, Old Calendarists organized by the name of “The Society of Traditionalist Christian Cult [Societatea Cultului Creștin Tradiționalist] in Mircești Village, Putna County”, received an affirmative answer to their request to be allowed free practice of their faith (Appendix 5). They immediately re-appeared in the constabulary reports, which mention the group’s “intensive propaganda aiming to close their ranks for the best possible organization. They ask to have their Old Calendarist churches back, taking legal action to obtain them”¹⁰⁵. The table enumerating the tolerated denominations mentions the Old Calendarist centres at Rădășeni, Bunești, Boroaia, Drăgușeni, Râșca, Liteni, Climăuți, with a combined number of 749 Old Calendarist believers. All the leaders of these communities were members of the “Plowers’ Front [Frontul Plugarilor]”, affiliated to the Romanian Communist Party.

¹⁰⁴ George Enache, *Strategii de infiltrare și atragere la colaborare a cultelor religioase elaborate de autoritățile comuniste din România în perioada 1945–1948, cu o privire specială asupra cazului Bisericii Ortodoxe Române* [Strategies to Infiltrate Religious Denominations and Prompt them to Collaborate, Devised by the Communist Authorities of Romania between 1945–1948, with Special Focus on the Romanian Orthodox Church], “Caietele CNSAS [Selected Records of CNSAS]”, year 1, no. 1/2008, pp. 53–93; George Enache, Adrian Petcu, *Patriarhul Justinian și Biserica Ortodoxă Română în anii 1948–1964* [Patriarch Justinian and the Romanian Orthodox Church between 1948–1964], Partener Publishing House, 2009, p. 21.

¹⁰⁵ The National Archives, records of the General Inspectorate of the Gendarmerie, File no. 19/1946, f. 19 (Informative note no. 711).

In May 1946, the same Old Calendarist group, this time calling itself the “Traditionalist Christian Cult [Cultul Creștin Tradiționalist]”, headed by a layperson – Ion Movileanu, obtained an authorization to function (operating license) from the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Arts. The official document reads: “Traditionalist Christians are temporarily acknowledged as a religious association, and are permitted to perform freely all their worship practices and liturgical services for their association, until a new law of Religious Affairs is issued”¹⁰⁶. This temporary license authorizing them to operate freely, allowed the Old Calendarists to draft their Statutes for functioning and to build churches and monasteries¹⁰⁷.

In 1947, the Ministry of Religious Affairs acknowledged another Old Calendarist group, named “The Religious Association of Eastern Traditionalist Christians [Asociația Religioasă a Creștinilor Tradiționaliști de Răsărit]” headquartered in Târgu Neamț, by decision no. 30630/1947. This association was headed by Gheorghe Iacobaș and Gheorghe Moșneagu, with Glicherie Tănase as their spiritual director. Iacobaș signed as “president of the Association of Traditionalist Christian Orthodox Cult [Asociația Cultului Creștin Ortodox Tradiționalist]” on February 5, 1947, and later as “representative of the administration of the Eastern Right-Worshipping Christian Cult [Cultul Creștin Pravoslavnic de Răsărit – where “pravoslavnic” actually translates as “orthodox”, the true faith]” (August 31 1948)¹⁰⁸. Around the same time construction works began for the “Lord’s Transfiguration” Monastery at Slătioara. According to Old Calendarist sources, “the foundation stone was laid by His Grace Glicherie Tănase, Archbishop and Metropolitan of the Eastern Orthodox Church, at that time Hieromonk Glicherie.”¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ Law no. 26 639/May 28 1946, published in “Monitorul Oficial [Official Gazette]”, part I, no. 216/June 3 1946, signed by Mihai Ralea, ad-interim minister; the National Archives, records of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Directorate of Studies, File no. 1/1945, f. 36. On the tolerance shown in 1946, see Alexandru-Alin Spănu, *Sectele religioase în rapoartele Serviciului de Informații al Armatei [Religious Sects in the Reports of the Army Intelligence Services]*, in *Partidul, Securitatea și Cultele 1945–1989 [The Communist Party, the Secret Police – Securitate and the Religious Denominations 1945–1989]*, Nemira Publishing House, 2005, pp.117–124 (p. 118).

¹⁰⁷ The National Archives, records of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Directorate of Studies, File no. 1/1945, f. 51; the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Directorate of Studies, File no. 1/1948, page 42 (License no. 30/February 28 1948 by which the “Traditionalist Christian Cult” was authorized to build a convent in Găgești, Putna County).

¹⁰⁸ The National Archives, records of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Directorate of Studies. File no. 1/1948, f. 116, 176.

¹⁰⁹ “Catacombele Ortodoxiei” [“The Catacombs of Orthodoxy”], the issue of May 2, 1999.

Archive documents show that there was great rivalry between the two Old Calendarist groups, which turned to the state institutions (the Ministry of Religious Affairs, as well as the Council of Ministers and the Ministry of Justice) to settle their conflicts. “Traditionalists” considered that the “Right-worshippers” of Târgu Neamț were dissidents, a faction that had split from their own cult. Movileanu once complained that Iacobaș had attracted to their side one of the priests of “his [Movileanu’s] cult” and, without complying with the terms of the Law of Religious Affairs, which regulated the procedural aspects of leaving one cult and joining another, had issued a license for that priest, which put the authorities in difficulty because “the respective priest possessed two sets of documents”¹¹⁰.

In 1948, the Ministry of Religious Affairs began investigations into the situation of the “Traditionalist Cult”. Most likely, a similar investigation was conducted for the “Right Worshippers”, but there are no documents to attest to this. The report drawn up on that occasion revealed that the only member of the leading committee who effectively managed the association was Movileanu, while the other members were not aware of the actual organizational situation. Although the Statutes stipulated that the association possessed the following units: parish, deanery, monasteries and the cathedral, actually only the parishes did exist.

According to this report, not all priests and monastics worked in the parishes indicated by the association’s administration, and not all possessed documents to certify their status, but “it can be said that the staff of the association is permanently on the move, shifting from one parish to the other, without notifying the Ministry of Religious Affairs, but simply following the orders issued by the president of the association”. The celebrants were recruited among the monks expelled or retired from the Orthodox Church.

At the church of Movilița Parish, an important centre of the “traditionalists”, the liturgical service was conducted with an antimimension belonging to the diocese of Roman, offered in 1905 by Bishop Gherasim to the “Dormition of Theotokos” church in the village of Țifești-Putna. The parish did not possess any register to record marriages, baptisms or funerals, and no bookkeeping was in place to keep track of its financial situation (income and expenses). The so-called account

¹¹⁰ The National Archives, records of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Directorate of Studies, File 1/1948, f. 18–21. Memorandum entitled *A Brief History of the Traditionalist Christian Cult Organization in the People’s Republic of Romania* (written by the organization’s members).

books were in fact some personal notebooks of Movileanu, “in utter disarray” and without any invoice attached, to justify either income or expenses. The latest congress of the association, held on September 5 1948, had raised the issue of finding a bishop who could ordain their priests. Finally, the report noted that the association intentionally avoided the supervision of the Ministry of Religious Affairs¹¹¹.

In 1948 was voted the new Law of Religious Affairs (Law 177/August 4 1948), which formally guaranteed freedom of conscience and religious freedom of the territory of the Romanian People’s Republic. In fact, as it is known, the state partially took over the ecclesiastical matters, and the Ministry of Religious Affairs actually became a body charged with supervision and control. The absolute novelty of this law lay in the fact that it abolished the distinction between “historical denominations” and associations, and instead all organizations having a religious character were uniformly termed “religious denominations”. In order to operate legally, the “denominations” were required to submit to the Ministry of Religious Affairs their Statutes of organization and functioning, and subsequently they could be acknowledged by the decree of the Great National Assembly Presidium¹¹². In compliance with this law, fourteen denominations were officially acknowledged: Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Armenian Gregorian, Old Rite Orthodox Christian (Lipovan), four Protestant denominations (Reformed, Evangelical Lutheran, Synodal

¹¹¹ The National Archives, records of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Directorate of Studies, File no. 1/1948, f. 1–9 („Report on the situation of the Religious Association of Traditionalist Christians in Mircești-Putna”).

¹¹² Decree no. 177/1948, *Monitorul Oficial* [Official Gazette] no. 204 of September 3 1948. “Religious denominations are free to organize themselves and can function freely, if their practices and rituals are not contrary to the Constitution, public security, public order and moral norms (Article 6). Religious denominations, in order to organize themselves and operate, must be acknowledged by a decree of the Great National Assembly Presidium, following the Government’s proposal in response to the recommendation issued by the Minister of Religious Affairs. The authorization to function can be withdrawn in a similar manner, in well justified cases (Article 13); to be acknowledged, each religious denomination will submit, through the Ministry of Religious Affairs, in order to be examined and sanctioned, its Statutes for organization and functioning, which mention the organizational, management and administration system, accompanied by the respective confession of the faith (Article 14); the Heads of each denomination, as well as metropolitans, archbishops, bishops, superintendents, apostolic administrators, administrative vicars and other holders of such positions, elected or appointed in compliance with the Statutes of the respective denominations, can perform their functions only with the approval of the Presidium of the Great National Assembly, issued by decree, following the Government’s proposal, with the recommendation of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. As a prerequisite, they have to take the oath of faith before the minister of Religious Affairs (Article 21)”.

Presbyterian and Unitarian), and four neo-Protestant ones (Baptist, Adventist, Pentecostal, Evangelical Christian), as well as two non-Christian denominations (Mosaic and Muslim)¹¹³. Although Old Calendarist representatives requested to be acknowledged, and had the “Traditionalist Cult” registered under no. 36857/ 1948, and the “Right-Worshipping Cult” under no. 41768/ 1948, licenses were never granted to these groups. Thus, due to the Law of Religious Affairs in Romania, none of these two Old Calendarist movements was acknowledged by the Romanian State¹¹⁴.

Surprisingly, from this moment on, the Old Calendarist movement became better organized and very visible to the communist authorities. In 1950, the “Traditionalists” had eighteen parishes, five sketes and three monasteries (Brădițel, Copăceni and Furceni), while the “Right-worshippers” had twenty-seven parishes (Appendices 6 and 7). The official name of the group headquartered in Slătioara, as it appears in the *Pastoral Letter* of 1950 addressed to all Right-Worshipping Christians and signed by Glicherie Tănase, was the *Religious Assembly of the Eastern Traditional Right-Worshipping Christians of People’s Republic of Romania* [*Adunarea religioasă a Creștinilor Pravoslavnici Tradiționali de Răsărit din Republica Populară Română*] (Appendix 8), while the group led by Movileanu was entitled the *Traditionalist Christian Cult* [*Cultul Creștin Tradiționalist*]. It is interesting to note that the documents issued by this Old Calendarist group, were signed by Movileanu as “president”, and by Gamaliil Papii as “spiritual administrator and confessor” (Appendix 9).

In 1948, the Eastern Patriarchs convened for the Moscow Conference had decided that the clergy and faithful in every country should observe the calendar adopted by the Holy Synod of the respective Church, and celebrate Easter uniformly, according to the unrevised calendar. Although the Old Calendarists were not invited to attend this conference, the decisions it reached indirectly concerned them. Actually, after this conference, the calendar differences could no longer justify the existence of Old Calendarism as a separate denomination,

¹¹³ Nicoleta Ionescu-Gură, *Stalinizarea României. Republica Populară română 1948–1950: transformări instituționale* [Romania’s Stalinization. The People’s Republic of Romania 1948–1950: Institutional Changes], Bic All Publishing House, 2005, pp. 382–390.

¹¹⁴ On this occasion the rapporteurs of the Ministry of Religious Affairs noted: “Statutes indicate that the leaders of these groups lack the necessary training and are unable to present the structure of these so-called denominations as a unitary set of doctrinal principles. The texts are chaotic, prolix, unsystematic, and fail to constitute proper Statutes” (The National Archives, records of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Directorate of Studies, file no.1/1948, f. 47).

but its existence became an internal problem of the Romanian Orthodox Church. Well aware of this fact, the Old Calendarists began on the one hand to search for bishops willing to form a separate synod and to ordain priests, and on the other hand to work towards the unification of the Old Calendarist movement.

Throughout the year 1950, the movement's leaders in Târgu Neamț made several attempts to contact the Russian Orthodox Church, and even requested the aid of the Ministry of Religious Affairs to do so. On October 22, 1950, on the occasion of the festive opening of the school year at the monastic seminary of Neamț, in the presence of the Patriarch and of the Syrian bishop Basil Samacha, a “right-worshipper” from Oglinzi Village-Neamț, believing that the bishop was Russian (as rumours went), presented a petition requesting that Patriarch Aleksei I of Moscow should ordain an Old Calendarist bishop¹¹⁵. However, the Traditionalists – at least some of them – opted for a different approach: monk Macarie Neacșu of Sf. Gheorghe- Copăcenii Skete sent a letter to Patriarch Justinian Marina, asking him to accept the ordination of a bishop who would shepherd the Old Calendarists (letter dated October 19, 1950)¹¹⁶.

In late 1950, the two Old Calendarist factions attempted a merger, in order to initiate coordinated actions aimed to gain recognition from the State. Thus, on November 17, 1950, a delegation from Slătioara Monastery arrived at Mircești-Putna and presented to Movileanu the minutes of a meeting held at Slătioara, summarizing the opinions of the “northern faction” (Glicherie- Moșneagu). On November 19, 1950 a meeting was held at Furceni-Tecuci, and attended by monks and laymen belonging to both Movileanu's and Slătioara groups. The debates ended with the decision that the president and leader of the unified movement should be a clergyman elected by casting lots, among the equal number of candidates proposed by each of the two parties. In this context, the Târgu Neamț faction proposed that those who adhered to Old Calendarism should not be re-baptised, while growing a beard and banning music from celebrations should no longer be mandatory. In contrast, the Movileanu faction asserted that baptism should be performed again, and music should be forbidden for weddings, as well as smoking, and that the movement's members should “completely abstain from worldly interests”. Traditionalists also proposed that the headquarters should be

¹¹⁵ *Ibidem*, f. 47–48.

¹¹⁶ The National Archives, records of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Directorate of Studies, file no. 2/1950, f. 31.

located at Focșani, with Târgu Neamț as a branch, while the “Right-worshippers” wanted the headquarters to be located at Târgu Neamț¹¹⁷. Finally, the two parties also failed to agree on the presidency of the unified movement¹¹⁸.

The “Traditionalist Christian Cult” led by Movileanu undertook systematic actions to obtain legal recognition, by sending several memoranda to the Ministry of Religious Affairs, as well as other State institutions. One such memorandum reads: “We, the Traditionalist Christian Cult [Cultul Creștin Tradiționalist] *have been martyred over two decades, as have been our communist comrades, who shared the same sufferings and cruel treatment...*” (February 9, 1950)¹¹⁹. Elsewhere, he boasted that the Old Calendarists had initiated the agricultural collectivization and cooperative-run communal farming in their villages, with Movileanu as the first one among the promoters of communal ownership of the land¹²⁰.

Another memorandum, signed by Gamaliil Papil and Ion Movileanu, required the “legal recognition of this cult, so that we can «federalize» with the acknowledged denominations and work jointly to take active part in the fight for peace”¹²¹. Moreover, in order to avoid being mistaken for the members of other denominations, in keeping with the directions issued by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the Old Calendarists chose as distinctive insignia an embroidered cross flanked by two wheat spikes, mandatory for all clergy members, to be worn by monks, priests and nuns on the right arm¹²².

More memoranda were sent in the year 1952¹²³, as well as complaints against the group of Piatra Neamț. The “Traditionalists” were accusing the “Right-worshippers” of: causing public disturbance, committing crimes against the movement (illegal conversions), usurping their title, forging public documents. They requested the Patriarchal Administration to declare whether the Patriarchate was also bothered by the “Right-worshippers” title and whether it perceived this as

¹¹⁷ *Ibidem*, f. 32–35.

¹¹⁸ *Ibidem*, f. 47.

¹¹⁹ *Ibidem*, f. 1.

¹²⁰ The National Archives, records of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Directorate of Studies, File no. 1/1945, f. 174.

¹²¹ The National Archives, records of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Directorate of Studies, File no. 1/1953, f. 53; Notification no. 32/July 17 1953.

¹²² The National Archives, records of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Directorate of Studies, File no. 74/1948, f. 21.

¹²³ The National Archives, records of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Directorate of Studies, File no. 3/1952, f. 3. Petition addressed by the Traditionalist Cult to the Ministry of Religious Affairs no. 43/ February 28 1952, requesting legal recognition.

“usurpation”¹²⁴. There were several instances during 1952, when the “Right-worshippers” attracted to their side churches, monasteries or persons previously belonging to the Traditionalist Cult¹²⁵.

In one of the petitions submitted to the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Movileanu accused Iacobaș, “who is not one of the founding members, nor one of the elected leaders of our organization, but has no other capacity than that of a mere adherent member and one of my delegates” of trying to take over the leadership of the Traditionalist Cult, “which I hold according to the law and statutes”.¹²⁶ In their turn, the Right-worshippers also petitioned the state authorities, requesting to be acknowledged as a denomination or to have their worship places authorized (Appendix 10).

By notification no. 9320/May 21 1954, the Ministry of Religious Affairs asked the Popular Republic’s Court of Focșani *raion* (a term designating an administrative entity, or district) to remove the “Traditionalist Christian Cult” from the register of legal persons (legal entities), because in compliance with the Law of 1948, the Traditionalist Cult had ceased to exist legally. By an Ordinance issued on May 27, 1954, the Court decided that the “Traditionalist Christian Cult” should be removed from the register of legal entities. In September 1954, Movileanu sued the Ministry of Religious Affairs, requesting it to take note of the fact that this cult had been acknowledged by the state, according to notification no. 38 955/August 3 1945, and demanding to receive 100 lei/per day as compensation for damages, until the cult’s statutes received the authorities’ approval of its statutes¹²⁷.

¹²⁴ *Ibidem*, f. 14–30 (Complaint submitted by the Traditionalist Christian Cult, registered with no. 68/June 24 1952); *Ibidem*, f. 13. The Prosecutor’s Office – Putna Court, no. 6283/June 28 1952 to the Ministry of Religious Affairs: “The conflict seems to be mainly caused by financial and material concerns – given the existence of two organizations, the patrimony of the Traditionalist cult tends to be divided according to the number of adherents”.

¹²⁵ *Ibidem*, f. 19: “Priest Martinian Comănici of Schitul Copăceni Village-Ilfov, having taken the oath, was converted illegally, under the pretext of an “union with the Neamțu group”, and received license no.230/August 23 1951, while he already held license no. 219/195 issued by our organization, and thus this priest came to possess two licenses from two distinct organizations, which constitutes public disturbance... Idem, St. Gheorghe Skete in Copăceni Village-Ilfov by means of various acts of proselytism, collected signatures by forging documents in order to obtain majority, and thus registered this religious association by the title of Right-worshipping organization”.

¹²⁶ *Ibidem*, f. 63–64.

¹²⁷ The National Archives, records of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Directorate of Studies, File no. 1/ 1954, f. 365, Note dated September 1, 1954 issued by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the Juridical Office.

His petition failed to obtain the desired response, however, and the cult's removal from the register of legal entities was definitive.

On June 19, 1954, at Copăcenii Skete, the representatives of the two Old Calendarist factions discussed again the possibility of an union, and on October 7, 1954, Ioan Movileanu, on behalf of the Traditionalist Christian Cult in Mircești and Dionisie Huguianu, as a representative of the Right-worshipping Christians, signed the *Cult's Unification Document* by which it was decided to merge the patrimonies of the two legal entities, and to title the new unified entity the "Traditionalist Christian Cult"¹²⁸. On July 12, 1954, on behalf of the unified cult, Dionisie Huguianu addressed Patriarch Justinian requesting an audience with him, "in order to discuss this religious matter, and definitively remedy the blatant injustice that has continued for 30 years"¹²⁹. As it turned out, however, this union was short-lived and in 1955 the two Old Calendarist factions separated again.

III.2. Galaction Cordun and Old Calendarist movement's organization (1955–1959)

As mentioned above, the Old Calendarists did not have any senior hierarchy. All worship places they erected were "consecrated" by monks or by defrocked hieromonks, such as Tănase Glicherie. Also, the Old Calendarists faced great difficulties in obtaining Holy Antimensia¹³⁰, or the Holy Chrism¹³¹. In 1955, former bishop Galaction Cordun (1883–1959) accepted the proposal of the Slătioara community to become the bishop of the Old Calendarists, following years-long discussions and repeated attempts.

Gheorghe Cordun was born in 1883 in Brehuști Village, Botoșani County¹³². Available sources provide contradictory data on how he joined monastic life or

¹²⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 607–608.

¹²⁹ *Ibidem*, f. 307.

¹³⁰ The Antimension (pl. Antimensia) is one of the most important liturgical items in an Orthodox Church. It is placed on the Holy Table, in the Altar. It is a rectangular piece of cloth, of either linen or silk, typically decorated with representations of the entombment of Christ, the four Evangelists, and scriptural passages related to the Eucharist. A small relic of a martyr-saint is sewn into it. The Eucharist cannot be celebrated without an antimension.

¹³¹ Chrism (Greek *chrisma*, meaning "ointment") is consecrated oil used by the Orthodox Church during the administration of certain mysteries, particularly those of baptism and anointing of the sick (unction), and other rites.

¹³² The information is provided by the study of late professor Gheorghe Vasilescu, entitled *Galaction Cordun*, based on the documents in the Romanian Patriarchate's Administration Archives; the Archives of the State Secretariat for Religious Affairs, report entitled "Galaction

how he was ordained as a deacon. According to some of these sources, he was ordained as hierodeacon by Primate Metropolitan Iosif Gheorghian, who supported him and offered him a scholarship to study at the Theological Seminary in Odessa. After his return from Odessa, he became a monk during the tenure of Metropolitan Pimen of Moldavia and Suceava, who also ordained him as arch-deacon in 1904, at the Metropolitan Cathedral of Iași 1904.

According to other sources, he was tonsured into monasticism at Căldărușani and ordained as a deacon at the same monastery. On March 1, 1905, he was transferred to the Metropolitan Cathedral, in Iași. The reference (canonical document) issued on his leaving the eparchy (no. 620/ February 11 1905) stated that “Galaction Cordun has been disobedient, and finally rebelled against the abbot and slandered him”. Between 1908–1911 he lived in Russia, then he returned to Romania as a deacon at Neamț Monastery (July–August 1911), Agapia Monastery (September 1911–February 1913) and Agafton Monastery (February–August 1913). From 1913 to 1915, he worked at Roman diocesan headquarters. In 1914 he was ordained as a hieromonk by Metropolitan Conon, and in 1915 he became a protosyncellus. On September 1, 1915 he was temporarily appointed as priest at the Metropolitan Cathedral in Bucharest, (pending the equivalence, i.e. recognition, of his theological training abroad), and in 1916 he received the rank of archimandrite.

Information on his theological studies in Russia is equally unclear. He enrolled in the Faculty of Theology in Cernăuți, which he attended for six semesters, then he was transferred to the Theological Academy of Petrograd, where after a single year of study he obtained his Bachelor’s degree. This degree was then validated by the Faculty of Theology in Bucharest, on October 28, 1915. The sources on which this biography is based reveal that there is no copy of any certificate or diploma to substantiate his theological training or his degrees.

During the first World War, while Bucharest was under German occupation, he opposed the implementation of the Gregorian calendar in the liturgical practice of the Romanian Orthodox Church. This has been and still is an argument used by the Old Calendarists, who claim it reveals Cordun’s attitude towards the matter of the calendar. Actually, his protest – as well as the protests of other priests or hierarchs at the time – took place in the sensitive context of the German occupation and actually had nothing to do with the revised calendar, adopted in 1924, against

Cordun”, dated March 6, 1957; Idem, report “Galaction Cordun” (June 16 1955); Romanian Patriarchate’s Administration Archives, *Date biografice asupra fostului arhiereu Galaction Cordun [Biographical Data on the Deposed Bishop Galaction Cordun]*, pages 1–3.

which Galaction Cordon raised no objections. The measure which the German occupation forces attempted to impose was equally criticized by Archimandrite Iuliu Scriban, one of the advocates of the 1924 calendar revision, as shown above¹³³. Even in the specific case of this protest, Cordon did not consider that introducing the Gregorian calendar would constitute a “dogmatic error”, but argued that it could be rejected only because of tradition and anti-Catholic feelings¹³⁴.

After the war, Galaction Cordon became the head of the “Religious Affairs and Cultural Propaganda Department [Serviciul religios și de propagandă culturală]” within the General Directorate of the Romanian Railways, established in 1922, and in this capacity he published a number of books, brochures, as well as articles on missionary topics¹³⁵. In 1924 he made a first attempt at securing the position of

¹³³ Archim. prof. dr. Iuliu Scriban, *Acte și mărturii privitoare la chestiuni și fapte bisericești în timpul ocupațiunii germane în România [Documents and Testimonies on Church Matters and Events During the German Occupation in Romania]*. Excerpts from “Înnoirea [Renewal]” journal, Bucharest, 1919; Idem, *Chestiunea calendarului în Biserica Ortodoxă [The Matter of the Calendar in the Orthodox Church]*, “Biserica Ortodoxă Română”, year XLI, no. 8 (May 1923), pp. 56–564; Idem, *Schimbarea calendarului. Cuvinte pentru duminirea poporului [Changing the Calendar. Explanations to Clarify the Matter to the People]*, “Biserica Ortodoxă Română”, no. 8 (1929), pp. 482–483 where he explains why calendar revision is necessary; Idem, *Potrivnicii calendarului îndreptat [Opponents of the Revised Calendar]*, “Biserica Ortodoxă Română [The Romanian Orthodox Church]” journal, no. 10 (1924), p. 637.

¹³⁴ In *Cuvinte de viață pentru cei trudiți [Life-Giving Words to the Weary Ones]*, Bucharest, 1922, pp. 314–319 (published in *Biserica Ortodoxă de Răsărit din România. Istoricul Mănăstirii Slătioara [The Eastern Orthodox Church in Romania. History of Slătioara Monastery]*, pp. 80–84; („Tradiția Ortodoxă [Orthodox Tradition]” no. 18, December 2007, pp. 9–10) he states: “I have stated that introducing the Gregorian calendar in the practice of our Church would not constitute a dogmatic error, since it is general knowledge that before the split that occurred among the Christian Churches, several methods were used for time recording, and the New Year started for some on January 1, as we have it, while for others it began on September 1 as is the beginning of our liturgical year, and for many others it was set on March 1, and so on”. “The new calendar could be rejected for only two major reasons: firstly, the argument of the tradition of the Orthodox Churches, among which our national Church has had the honour to belong since the earliest times when Romanians were Christianized; secondly, because it [the new calendar] is the work of the Catholic Church, through Pope Gregory XIII”.

¹³⁵ See: Arhiepiscop Galaction Cordon, *Misionarismul la Căile Ferate [Missionary Work at the Railways Directorate]*, “Biserica Ortodoxă Română”, year LVIII, no. 5–6, May–June 1940, pp. 357–360. The Romanian Academy Library collection holds the following books and missionary brochures, signed by former bishop Galaction Cordon: *Ce este adventismul [What Adventism is]*, Bucharest, 1919; *Poate știința să înlocuiască creștinismul? [Can science replace Christianity?]*, Bucharest, 1919; *Cine grăiește adevărul? [Who Speaks the Truth?]*, Bucharest, 1922; *Cuvinte de viață pentru cei trudiți [Life-Giving Words to the Weary Ones]*, Bucharest, 1922; *Ce cred oamenii învățați și de stat ai lumii despre religie și existența lui Dumnezeu? [What do the Scholars and Statesmen Think of Religion and the Existence of God?]*, Bucharest, 1923; *Problema muncitorească privită din punct de vedere religios-creștin [Laborers' Matter Regarded from the Religious-Christian Point of View]*, Bucharest,

vicar bishop in Constanța Diocese¹³⁶. However, it was only in 1935 that he was elected as vicar bishop, and titled Craioveanul (of Craiova) – a position newly established within the Diocese of Râmnic and Noul Severin¹³⁷. On October 2, 1935 the freshly-appointed Bishop Galaction Craioveanul was also designated as member of the “Committee for religious doctrine and life [Comisiunea pentru doctrină și viață religioasă]”, which had been tasked by the Holy Synod with “studying the means of opposing Old Calendarism in its complexity and presenting the necessary actions to be taken in order to appease the population and prevent subversive propaganda”¹³⁸.

Official history of the “The Old Calendar Orthodox Church” omits to mention the following episode in Cordon’s biography, by arguing instead that: “he fully tasted the bitterness of the calendar innovation for 31 years, from 1924 to 1955”¹³⁹. It is known, however, that on October 13, 1935, as a rapporteur of the Special Commission appointed by the Holy Synod following the events of Albineț, Bishop Galaction Craioveanul put forth this proposal: “The Holy Synod is asked to resume its requests to the honored government, in order to take all necessary measures, so that all state authorities work for the full enforcement of the revised calendar. Also, the respective bishop (of Bălți) together with the local clergy, should again take all necessary measures to explain it to the people and to make it accepted, so that further incidents such as Albineț can be avoided”¹⁴⁰.

1923; *Învățămintul religios înăscut în fierea omului* [Religious Teachings Innate in all People], Bucharest, 1923; *Așezământul Sfintei Biserici Ortodoxe Universale pentru venerarea și invocarea sfinților* [Decrees of the Universal Orthodox Church on Saint’s Veneration and Invocation], Bucharest, 1924; *Beția* [Drunkness], Bucharest, 1924; *Etica creștină și socialismul* [Christian Ethics Versus Socialism], Bucharest, 1924; *Este vătămător fumatul?* [Is Smoking Harmful?], Bucharest, 1925; *Vizita IPS Domnului Dr. Miron Cristea, Mitropolit al României în Basarabia la 12–18 mai 1921* [The Visit of His Eminence Dr Miron Cristea, Metropolitan of Romania, to Bessarabia 12–18 May 1921], Bucharest, 1926; *Catehismul necredinciosului* [Catechizing the Unbelievers], Bucharest, 1926; *Cererile dizolvante sociale și religioase în timpul de față și combaterea lor* [Detrimental Social and Religious Unrest Today and Ways of Opposing It], Râmnicu-Vâlcea, 1935; *Cărticică de rugăciuni pentru tot creștinul și ostașul* [Prayer Book for Christians and Soldiers], f.l., 1941.

¹³⁶ “Biserica Ortodoxă Română” journal, March 1924, p. 167.

¹³⁷ *Desbaterile Sfântului Sinod* [Holy Synod Debates], in “Biserica Ortodoxă Română”, year LIII, 1935, Official Events Section, p. 191.

¹³⁸ *Desbaterile Sfântului Sinod* [Holy Synod Debates], in “Biserica Ortodoxă Română” year III (1935), Official Events Section, pp. 194–195, p. 197.

¹³⁹ *Istoricul Mănăstirii Slătioara* [History of Slătioara Monastery], p. 124.

¹⁴⁰ *Desbaterile Sfântului Sinod*, the meeting of December 1935, in “Biserica Ortodoxă Română”, year LIII, 1935, Official Events Section, pp. 211–212; *Desbaterile Sfântului Sinod al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române* [Debates of the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church], the meeting

Shortly after his installation as vicar bishop, the Holy Synod documents mention the conflicts arising in the diocese of Râmnicul Noul Severin, where Bishop Vartolomeu Stănescu accused his vicar of disobedience and libelling¹⁴¹. Documents submitted by the bishop of Râmnicul Noul Severin to the Canon Law and Disciplinary Committee show that the behaviour of vicar Bishop Cordun was unworthy of his rank, and charged him with abuse of power, embezzlement, and immoral conduct. He was also accused of seizing valuable liturgical items (icons, episcopal vestments, furniture, as well as money) from several monasteries¹⁴².

Although he had repeatedly demanded to be allowed to settle in Craiova and to serve in the Diocesan Cathedral, the Holy Synod decided during the meeting of June 16 1937 (based on the documents submitted by bishop Vartolomeu Stănescu), to grant Galaction Cordun the right to take up residence in one of the monasteries of Oltenia. The response of Galaction Cordun to this decision implicitly sheds light on the circumstances leading to his transfer to the eparchy of Constanța: “The floor passes to His Grace Galaction Craioveanul who asks the Holy Synod for a trial, because he cannot accept being sent to a monastery, as he declares himself not guilty. Or, in the general interest of peace, he asks to be transferred to another eparchy, wherever a vicar bishop is needed and the titular bishop is

of March 11 1937 in “Biserica Ortodoxă Română” year LV, 1937, Official Events Section, p. 18; the meeting of March 29, Idem, p. 23; the meeting of March 30, Idem, p. 26; the meeting of March 31, Idem, p. 29 (His Grace Bishop Galaction asks the Holy Synod to allow him to take residence at Craiova, thus forcing the diocesan bishop to take measures in order to provide him with a dwelling place, and to allow him to serve unhindered at the Cathedral of Craiova); the meeting of June 16, Idem, pp. 54–55.

¹⁴¹ *Desbaterile Sfântului Sinod [Holy Synod Debates]*, in “Biserica Ortodoxă Română”, the meeting of 21 March 1936, in Idem, p. 33.

¹⁴² Art 2349, 2350, 2452, 2496/1936, respectively 349, 502, 680, 759, 1003, 1020, 3977/1937. The Patriarchate Administration Archives, *Date biografice asupra fostului arhiereu Galaction Cordun [Biographical data on the former bishop Galaction Cordun]*, f. 3; the items misappropriated by the defrocked bishop Galaction Cordun are listed in the Report issued by the Holy Diocese of Râmnicul Noul Severin, the Economic and Financial Directorate, no. 11 539/Dec. 17 1937 (2 folios). A few years later, in 1940, bishop Galaction Silistreanul was the protagonist of a scandal caused by his affair with Lucia Călin, an actress of the National Theatre in Iași, who bore him a child. In 1941, by sentence no. 558/1941 of the Appellate Court Bucharest, Section II, he was obliged to pay for the child’s support. Later on, Cordun declared him a “spiritual son” and had him join a monastery. The same information is provided by Dudu Velicu who noted on September 11 1945: “Galaction Cordun used to be a vicar bishop of the Diocese of Tomis, and then abbot of Neamț Monastery. He even has a son: Monk Ieronim, who is young, handsome and elegantly dressed. He is not educated, having only attended four years of primary school” (Dudu Velicu, *Biserica Ortodoxă Română în perioada sovietizării României. Însemnări zilnice 1945–1947 [The Romanian Orthodox Church during Romania’s Sovietization]*, The National Archives, Alina Tudor-Pavelescu (ed.), Bucharest, 2004, p. 44.

willing to accept him. For instance, he deems that His Grace Gherontie of Constanța, who has known him since young age, may accept him as his vicar. His Grace Gherontie declares he does not need any vicar bishop, as he is still in good health, and able to run the eparchy by himself. However, in the interest of peace and concord, as he has known Galaction since childhood, he accepts him as vicar bishop on the following terms: 1. He should be paid the salary of vicar bishop by the diocese of Râmnicul Noul Severin; 2. Cordon's responsibilities in the eparchy of Constanța will be indicated by His Grace Gherontie; 3. In case of any disagreement, he will be allowed to address the Holy Synod in order to settle it"¹⁴³.

Following the debates, the Holy Synod decided to transfer Galaction Cordon to the Diocese of Constanța as vicar bishop, maintaining his title Craioveanul (of Craiova). A short time later, because Bishop Vartolomeu had requested an extended, two-year leave, after which he was to retire, Bishop Galaction Craioveanul requested an annulment of his transfer to the Diocese of Constanța, intending to return to the eparchy of Râmnicul Noului Severin. However, during the meeting of October 25, 1938, the Holy Synod decided to create the position of vicar bishop for the Diocese of Constanța, and to transfer Galaction Cordon to the newly-created permanent position, granting him the title "Silistoreanul" (of Silistra)¹⁴⁴.

It is also worth mentioning that Vicar Bishop Galaction Cordon, first titled Craioveanul (of Craiova) then Silistoreanul (of Silistra), held the position of secretary of the Holy Synod, from 1935 to 1948, briefly discontinued between 1941–1942. During the period 1944–1945 he is mentioned as abbot of Neamț and Secu Monasteries, while the circumstances of his appointment and retrogradation in the same time remain unknown¹⁴⁵. In 1940, Romania had lost the territory of southern Dobruja (the "Quadrilateral"), which included the counties of Durostorum and Silistra, and thus the title of Bishop of Silistoreanul had become an honorary one.

The daily notes of Dudu Velicu, which provide valuable information on the Church life during the early years of the communist regime, reveal that in January 1946, taking advantage of his position as abbot of Neamț Monastery, Galaction

¹⁴³ *Desbaterile Sfântului Sinod al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române [Debates of the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church]*, the Holy Synod meeting of June 16, 1937 in "Biserica Ortodoxă Română", year LVI, 1938, Official Events Section, p. 55

¹⁴⁴ *Desbaterile Sfântului Sinod al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române*, the Holy Synod meeting of June 25, 1938, "Biserica Ortodoxă Română", year LVI, 1938, Official Events Section, p. 54.

¹⁴⁵ It is known that at Neamț, Bishop Cordon ordained Father Cleopa as hierodeacon (December 27, 1944), respectively hieromonk (January 23, 1945).

Cordun engaged in business with the great industrialist Max Ausschnitt, who rented the timber factory owned by the monastery. Patriarch Nicodim was informed and decided to have the abbot replaced: “Instead of Galaction Cordun, abbot of Neamț Monastery (no longer appreciated because of his misdealings there – as always in his entire life, actually), Patriarch Nicodim will likely appoint the current abbot of Cernica Monastery, Partenie Bușcu.... As Galaction Gordun Silistoreanul lost his position as abbot of Neamț Monastery, he declared his hard feelings against Patriarch Nicodim, the author of his removal. As the cowardice of Vicar Bishop Galaction is well known, his hostility and resentment are of no importance, should the Patriarch decide to render him harmless, by offering him some petty advantage, if necessary”¹⁴⁶.

The notes of Dudu Velicu also show that Vicar Bishop Galaction Cordun was on friendly terms with Emil Bodnăraș, the General Secretary of the Council of Ministers (with whom he had a meeting in 1946¹⁴⁷) as well as with Radu Roșculeț, Minister of Religious Affairs. The latter advised Cordun to apply for the see of the newly-established Archdiocese of Oltenia¹⁴⁸ and he also made an unsuccessful attempt to recommend Cordun to Patriarch Nicodim, for the position of Patriarchal vicar bishop in January 1947¹⁴⁹. According to the official Old Calendarist history, in 1947 Galaction Cordun was approached for the first time by the representatives of the “Eastern Church”, and they agreed that he should be installed at Slătioara, as soon as the monastery was ready¹⁵⁰.

In 1947, the Law concerning the retirement of vicar bishops was issued; it stipulated that “vicar bishops, bishops, archbishops and metropolitans unable to perform their duties due to their health condition of other reasons, will retire at

¹⁴⁶ Dudu Velicu, *op.cit.*, pp. 96, 98 (notes dated January 16 and 24 1946); Ibidem, p. 95 (note dated January 6, 1946), p. 104 (note dated February 6, 1946). Dudu Velicu was a secretary of Patriarch Miron Cristea, secretary of Eugen Cristescu, Director of the Special Intelligence Service between 1941–1944, and then worked for the Ministry of Religious Affairs. On the reputation as “social climber and worldly-minded hegumen” of Galaction Cordun, see Petre Pandrea, *Călugărul Alb [The White Monk]*, p. 15. The book is available online at <http://www.scribd.com/doc/35654729/Petre-Pandrea-Calugarul-Alb>.

¹⁴⁷ Dudu Velicu, *op.cit.*, p. 154 (note dated June 1, 1946).

¹⁴⁸ Abolished in 1945, the Archdiocese of Oltenia was reinstated by Law no. 196, published in the Official Gazette [Monitorul Oficial] part I, no. 136 of June 18, 1947, shepherded by the Archbishop then Metropolitan Firmilian Marin (1947–1972). Following the decision of the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church (registered by the Ministry of Religious Affairs with no. 2657/1949), by Decree no. 133/1949 the Holy Archdiocese of Craiova was elevated to the rank of Metropolis, titled: the Holy Metropolis of Oltenia.

¹⁴⁹ Dudu Velicu, *op.cit.*, p. 205 (note dated January 16 1947), p. 206 (note dated January 18, 1947).

¹⁵⁰ “Catacombele Ortodoxiei [Catacombs of Orthodoxy]”, no. 2, May 1999.

the request of the Ministry of Culture, following the notification of a special Commission”¹⁵¹. Galaction Cordon, who had retained only the title of Silisteanul, but not the actual position of vicar bishop for the diocese of Constanța, had to comply with this law and was assigned a domicile at Căldărușani Monastery¹⁵².

The “Old Calendar Church” has its own version about the removal of Galaction Cordon. It is asserted that he was part of a group of “monarchists” alongside bishops Chesarie Păunescu of Lower Danube and Atanasie Dincă Bârlădeanu, whom Patriarch Justinian Marina had removed from the Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church. Old Calendarists also claim that today, Galaction Cordon’s defrocking is no longer valid as, in 1990, Patriarch Teoctist annulled all politically-motivated defrockings, including that of Cordon¹⁵³. Indeed, the Holy Synod annulled the defrocking of Metropolitan Visarion Puiu in 1990, but this cannot apply to Cordon also¹⁵⁴. Of late, a favorable attitude towards former bishop Galaction Cordon seems to arise, even among the Orthodox theologians. For instance, Father Ioan Dură states that Galaction Cordon was persecuted by the communist authorities and consequently he ought to be counted as one of the confessor hierarchs of the Romanian Orthodox Church.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵¹ The Law concerning the retirement of vicar bishops was published in the Official Gazette [Monitorul Oficial] year CXV, no. 121 of May 30, 1947 (Nicoleta Ionescu-Gură, *Stalinizarea României. Republica Populară Română 1948–1950: transformări instituționale* [[Romania’s Stalinization. The People’s Republic of Romania 1948–1950: Institutional Changes], Bic All Publishing House, 2005, p. 359); On the opposition of Patriarch Nicodim, see Archim. Petroniu, *Întâmplări din vremea patriarhului Nicodim* [Events during the tenure of Patriarch Nicodim], “Teologie și Viață [Theology and Life]” no. 7–12 (1999), pp. 167–169.

¹⁵² On May 29 1953, Bishop Galaction Cordon sent a letter to Patriarch Justinian, complaining about the difficult conditions at Căldărușani, and requesting to be transferred to a monastery where he could take better care of his health (the Romanian Patriarchate’s Archives no. 4403/1953). His petition was discussed in the Holy Synod’s meeting of June 8, 1953, and it was decided to relocate him to Vărzărești (Buzău). Galaction Cordon arrived at Vărzărești on September 24, 1953. From there, he moved to Ciolanu Monastery (October 23, 1954) following an appeal by which Buzău Eparchy informed the Patriarchate that Vărzărești was an unfit dwelling place for him (Notification 8548/September 29 1954).

¹⁵³ *Biserica Ortodoxă de Răsărit din România. Istoricul Mănăstirii Slătioara* [The Eastern Orthodox Church in Romania. History of Slătioara Monastery], p. 206; Constantin Bujor, *65 de ani de persecuție a Bisericii Ortodoxe Române de stil vechi* [65 years’ Persecutions Against the Romanian Old Calendar Church (Oct. 1924–Dec 1989)], published with the blessing of His Eminence Vasile Mogârzan, Archbishop and Metropolitan of the Eastern Orthodox Church of Romania, *Schimbarea la Față* Publishing House, 1998, p. 44.

¹⁵⁴ On the annulment of defrocking of Metropolitan Visarion Puiu, see “Biserica Ortodoxă Română”, year CVIII, no. 11–12 (Nov.-Dec), 1990, p. 189.

¹⁵⁵ In his article on the hierarchs put into detention by the communist authorities, Father Ioan Dură mentions the Old Calendarist leaders Galaction Cordon, Evloghie Oța and Pahomie Morar, and in footnote 171 (p. 55), Father Dură states: “I have naturally included hierarch Galaction

On April 13, 1955, the Romanian Patriarchate received a *Notification* from the “Central Committee of the Old Calendar Organization [Consiliul Central al Organizației de Stil Vechi]”, registered by the Bucharest Court of Law with number 2169/April 13 1955; the document declared that this Committee had convened for an extraordinary meeting on April 5, 1955 and “agreed to offer the leading position to His Grace Bishop Galaction, an old-standing and worthy fighter for the cause of the Old Calendar”. Interestingly, the document was endorsed by the signatures of Galaction Cordon, as well as Dionisie Huguéanu, Ion Movileanu, and Father Aurel Vasilescu (the founder of the Old Calendarist hub at Podu Înalt), as an expression of the Old Calendarist movement unification (Appendix 11)¹⁵⁶.

Receiving this Notification, Patriarch Justinian Marina urgently summoned an extraordinary meeting on April 14, 1955 (the Great and Holy Thursday), calling the members of the Holy Synod present in Bucharest for the consecration of the Holy Chrism, to discuss the situation of Bishop Galaction Cordon who was causing a schism. Finding that former bishop Galaction Cordon had infringed canon law provisions (Apostolic Canon 45, Canon 15 of Councils I–II Constantinople, and the Third Ecumenical Council), and noting that it was not the first such infringement from the part of the respective bishop, but he had repeatedly failed to observe church discipline, the Holy Synod decided to punish him by defrocking, with no right to appeal this decision¹⁵⁷. The Ministry of Religious Affairs was also informed,

Cordon, who after being removed from the eparchial see, had joined the Old Calendar Orthodox Church, among the hierarchs of the Romanian Orthodox Church. Bishop Galaction was persecuted by the communist authorities, both as a hierarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church (by removing him from office in 1948), but especially as a bishop of the Old Calendar Orthodox Church beginning with 1955, when he was also imprisoned” (Pr. prof. dr. Ioan Dură, *Ierarhi ai Bisericii Ortodoxe Române îndepărtați din scaun și trimiși în recluziune monastică de către autoritățile comuniste în anii 1944–1981* [*Hierarchs of the Romanian Orthodox Church Deposed and Sent into Monastic Reclusion by Communist Authorities Between 1944–1981*], “Altarul Banatului” journal, no. 11–12, Oct-Dec. 2002, pp.51–52). On this point, Father Dură agrees with theologian and journalist Florian Bichir who also wrote: “Because of the persecutions he had suffered, on April 13, 1955, Galaction Cordon, retired bishop of the official Church, a distinguished theologian and former secretary of the Holy Synod, publicly announced his adherence to the Old Calendar Orthodox Church, thus becoming the first archbishop and metropolitan of the “Old Calendarists”. (Florian Bichir, *Patimile Bisericii Ortodoxe de Stil Vechi*, “Evenimentul Zilei” newspaper, Sunday, January 4, 2004).

¹⁵⁶ Archives of the State Secretariat for Religious Affairs, the Central Committee of the Right-Worshipping Church (Old Calendar Organization) – Bucharest [Consiliul Central al Bisericii Dreptslăvitoare București] to the Ministry of Culture and Religious Affairs (notification no. 2171/April 13 1955).

¹⁵⁷ The Patriarchate Administration Archives, file no. 34/1955, pp. 24–26; text published in “Biserica Ortodoxă Română” no. 3–4 (1955).

in order to discontinue the payment of pension for the former bishop who, once deposed, could no longer receive the benefits granted to retired bishops.

Immediately after announcing his departure from the Orthodox Church, Galaction Cordun began ordaining priests. A case in point is Cantor Petru Mihiu, a member of Tulgheș Parish, who wished to be ordained a priest or at least a deacon in the respective parish. As Church authorities had not answered his requests, he contacted former bishop Galaction Cordun, who on April 5, 1955 (the date of his *Notification* to the Patriarchate) performed his ordination as priest at Rîpa-Rîmeți Monastery. For a year, the freshly-ordained priest did not perform any divine service, but remained at Tulgheș as a cantor. Conflicts with the parish priest prompted him to seek the Old Calendarists, and Galaction Cordun delegated him to serve as a priest for the Old Calendarist believers in Buhalnița Village, between November 1, 1955 and December 31, 1956¹⁵⁸. More such “ordinations” similar to the one of June 21, 1955, took place at Slătioara Monastery (Appendix 12).

An inquiry carried out by Suceava deanery into the canonical situation of priest Petru Mihiu implicitly demonstrates that the case of Galaction Cordun was yet unknown in the territory. The protopope noted the following: “the Old Calendarist Father Mihiu is not alienated from the Orthodox Church. He respects it, and has stated that, if the Holy Metropolis of Moldavia and Bukovina acknowledges his ordination as priest of April 5, 1955, performed by former bishop Galaction Cordun before his defrocking, and if he could be employed by an Orthodox parish under the jurisdiction of the Holy Archdiocese of Iași, he intends to do missionary work in favor of the Mother Church and to dissolve the Old Calendarist centres of Buhalnița and Coroi”.

When Galaction Cordun became a “metropolitan” of the northern group, tensions grew strong within the Old Calendarist movement. These are documented by several petitions submitted by Ion Movileanu to the Ministry of Religious Affairs, to protest against a “confusing hierarchy created by Cordun” which constituted an “illegal substitution” aimed to supersede the hierarchy of the Romanian Orthodox Church. Movileanu denounced the excessive tolerance of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, which left the issue to be solved by the Romanian Orthodox Church, as well as the slackness of the Romanian Orthodox Church which considered that

¹⁵⁸ The National Archives, records of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Directorate of Studies, File no. 2 bis 2/1957, f. 43–44.

the problem had to be tackled by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. He also showed that the group based at Slătioara was “a movement affecting primarily the Romanian Orthodox Church, and functioning on its own with no external control, carrying out immense proselytizing and challenging our popular democracy regime”¹⁵⁹.

Another memorandum submitted to the Ministry of Religious Affairs noted that a certain Mircea Ispir as well as others held illegal vicariate mandates issued by Cordon, going from village to village to visit the less organized Old Calendarist communities and proselytising, by claiming to represent the true Old Calendar church, headquartered at Slătioara. He had made similar attempts at Păunești-Vrancea (one of the “traditionalists” fiefs), “leading people into error” as Movileanu put it, by claiming to hold an operating license issued by the Supreme Court. They thus converted the skete of Copăcenii, as well as the nuns’ skete of Găgești, Răcoasa Parish, Panciu Administrative District. “This proselytism – Movileanu wrote in one of his memoranda – goes even further, within the Orthodox Church, leaving the impression that it is tolerated by the Ministry and the Orthodox Church, since nobody intervenes”¹⁶⁰. Also, a motion (formal note) was sent to Prime Minister Chivu Stoica (1955–1961) by the leaders of the Traditionalist Christian Cult [Cultul Creștin Tradiționalist], denouncing the “discrimination, intolerable under our regime”, against a religious denomination¹⁶¹, while several petitions submitted by “traditionalist” communities demanded that it be acknowledged as a religious denomination (Appendix 18). All this demonstrates that rivalry between the two Old Calendarist factions continued after 1955 and the group of Slătioara, strengthened by the arrival of Galaction Cordon, began gaining over monasteries, sketes and parishes which had previously adhered to the group led by Ion Movileanu.

In August 1955, according to the Official History of the “Old Calendar Church of Romania [Biserica de Stil Vechi din Romania]”, Galaction Cordon and Glicherie Tănase were brought from Slătioara to the headquarters of the Secret Police [Securitate] in Ploiești, in order to be interrogated. Both were placed in confinement: Cordon at Cernica Monastery, and Glicherie in Răchitoasa Village, in the Bărăgan Plain¹⁶².

¹⁵⁹ The National Archives, records of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Directorate of Studies, File no. 1/ 1956, f. 363.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibidem*, f. 365.

¹⁶¹ The National Archives, records of the Religious Affairs Department, Directorate of Studies, File no. 2/ 1957 (April-December 1957), f. 29–32. Memorandum registered with no. 40936 on April 6 1957.

¹⁶² *Istoricul Mănăstirii Slătioara*, p. 120, pp. 136–139; C. Bujor, *op.cit.*, pp. 42; 44–46.

In the autumn of 1955, Galaction Cordon began petitioning Patriarch Justinian, asking for forgiveness and the annulment of his defrocking. On September 8, 1955, Galaction Cordon, then residing at Cernica Monastery, sent a letter to Patriarch Justinian by which he admitted his culpability and guilt, and asked the Holy Synod for forgiveness, promising to obey Church discipline and break with the Old Calendarists completely. He also asked to receive the pension needed in order to care for his own health (Appendix 13)¹⁶³. Because he had continued, even after his defrocking, to perform ordinations and other religious services which he had been forbidden to officiate, the Holy Synod submitted his case to a commission including Prof. Dr. Liviu Stan and Fr. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Stăniloae, assisted by patriarchal counsellor Rev. Gheorghe Soare, asking them to present a joint report on his canonical situation generated by the actions he had carried out after defrocking.

Over the year 1956, Galaction Cordon undertook a number of actions aimed at organizing the Old Calendarist movement. The freedom he enjoyed during his so-called “house arrest” allowed him to stay in touch with the Old Calendarists and even perform ordinations or elevate priests to the rank of protopope (arch-priest) (Appendix 14). On August 1, 1956 he sent a notification to the Romanian Patriarchate, stating: “I declare before the right-worshipping people that I am and remain the spiritual head of the Eastern Right-Worshipping Church [Biserica Pravoslavnică de Răsărit]” (August 1, 1956)¹⁶⁴.

He also introduced regulations concerning several aspects of worship practices. For instance, on August 1 1956 he elevated parish priest Father Jora Vasile to the rank of archpriest for the churches in Iași region, and in a letter addressed to the Old Calendarist Protopopiate (deanery) I Suceava (November 15, 1956) he prohibited the use of the Holy Antimensia not signed by himself, from December 1, 1956 onwards, “in order to protect the Holy Church against canonical errors and to prevent from now on the priests from having to carry the Holy Antimensia from parish to parish for various services, on their own initiative, on behalf of our Church”¹⁶⁵.

The tolerant attitude of the abbot of Cernica Monastery towards Galaction Cordon was repeatedly noted in a number of reports submitted by the Bucharest

¹⁶³ The Patriarchate Administration Archives, file 34/1955, f. 28.

¹⁶⁴ The National Archives, records of the Religious Affairs Department, Directorate of Studies, File no. 1/1956, f. 397.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibidem*, f. 372, 403.

regional rapporteur. These reports reveal that between August 15 to December 24, 1956, Galaction Cordun was registered as a dweller of Cernica Monastery. Actually, he was repeatedly allowed to leave the monastery, which the rapporteur had signalled several times: “However – the rapporteur noted – the abbot took no measures in order to bring him back to the monastery, but instead continues to allow him to live outside the monastery, which contradicts monastic rules and regulations and would not be tolerated to any other dweller in the community. In order to evade supervision, Cordun pretends to be ill and in need of medical treatment, and thus he has obtained countless leaves of absence from the abbot and the Patriarchate, taking advantage of this to continue unhindered his agitations among the Old Calendarists”¹⁶⁶. The regional rapporteur for Bucharest proposed that the Ministry of Religious Affairs should request the Ministry of Social Policies [Ministerul Prevederilor Sociale] to discontinue the payment of his pension, until he returned to dwell at Cernica¹⁶⁷.

One of Cordun’s domiciles in Bucharest was the house of a niece (married name Georgescu), on Marcovici street¹⁶⁸. The rapporteur’s investigation revealed that Georgescu, the owner of the building where the former bishop Cordun dwelt, had been a prominent communist, member of the Central Committee of the Romanian Workers’ Party [PRM], and by the nature of his position had connections to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the police [Militia]. In this house, Cordun received the visits of several Old Calendarist leaders. This building, or possibly the building in Cuza Vodă street, was “the headquarters of the Old Calendar Orthodox Church of Romania”, as show certain documents signed by Cordun during this period (Appendix 15).

In his actions related to the organization and functioning of this cult, Galaction Cordun was assisted by a mysterious person – Mircea Ispir, tonsured into monasticism and ordained by the name Ilarion, who according to the rapporteurs was usually seen wearing civilian clothes. In 1957, Galaction Cordun together with Mircea Ispir and other Old Calendarist leaders were part of a group of twenty-six persons brought to the Regional Military Court no. 2 Bucharest for the so-called

¹⁶⁶ The National Archives, records of the Religious Affairs Department, Directorate of Studies, File no. 1/1956 (January-December 1956), f. 563 (Report of December 24, 1956).

¹⁶⁷ *Ibidem*, f. 387. Report containing proposals to discontinue the pension granted to the former bishop Galaction Cordun.

¹⁶⁸ The National Archives, records of the Religious Affairs Department, Directorate of Studies, Department of Religious Affairs, Directorate of Studies, File no. 2/1957 (April–December 1957), f. 640.

“PSDI trial”, a court case against the sympathizers of Titel Petrescu’s PSDI – the Independent Social Democratic Party (September 16, 1957)¹⁶⁹.

In the year 1958, Galaction Cordon petitioned Patriarch Justinian again, requesting the annulment of his defrocking. On June 13, 1958 he complained that over the last few years, he had “gone through every possible misery, culminating with imprisonment”, before arriving at Căldărușani “exhausted and extremely ill, all because of Ispir – a fraud and a vile man” (Appendix 16). It is interesting to note that in these petitions, Galaction Cordon turned away from Old Calendarism („I can prove that I have definitively renounced the Old Calendar and that I was simply misled, until I rejected the Old Calendarists’ dishonest scheme”), declaring that his signature had been forged, by the notary even, and that he had been deceived: “I deny having signed the documents that have been shown to you lately, about all sorts of things which I never did, and my signature was forged by those who intended to harm me, who keep harming me even now”. On September 22, 1958, from Căldărușani, Galaction Cordon sent a final petition, asking to have his defrocking annulled: “For the last time, I am humbly asking you to consider proposing an annulment of my defrocking, as you promised me when you received me and forgave me” (Appendix 17)¹⁷⁰.

On the meeting of December 12, 1958, based on the conclusions of the report submitted by a specially designated committee, the Holy Synod definitively rejected the request of former bishop Galaction Cordon to revoke his defrocking, and maintained the decision of defrocking him issued in the meeting of April 14, 1955. The decision was announced both to Cordon and to the abbot of Căldărușani Monastery, where Galaction Cordon was living at the time. A few months later,

¹⁶⁹ *Ibidem*, f. 651. The Independent Social Democratic Party [Partidul Social-Democrat Independent] appeared in 1946, by the scission of the social-democrats, when the “branch” led by Lothar Rădăceanu-Ștefan Voitec succeeded in imposing collaboration with the Communist Party, against the will of the organization’s “historical leaders” – Constantin Titel-Petrescu and Ion Flueraș. Following the unsatisfactory results in the 1946 elections, they accused the government of faking the actual percentage they had obtained, sent international letters of protest and required that the elections be held again. The Party’s leaders were arrested between 1948–1949, and in 1952 they were brought before the court of justice and sentenced to ten to twenty-five years hard labour in prison. Constantin Titel-Petrescu was released, being forced to sign a letter in which he acknowledged and praised the “achievements of the democratic-popular regime” (the document was published in “Scînteia” newspaper on December 18, 1955). He died on September 2, 1957, following a heart attack. (Ilarion Tiu, *Manevre de intimidare ale Partidului Comunist [Intimidation Tactics of the Communist Party]*, “Jurnalul Național”, January 29, 2008).

¹⁷⁰ The Patriarchate Administration Archives, File “Galaction Cordon”, f. 74.

le left the monastery, and on May 2, 1959 Galaction Cordun was already at Slătioara, *accompanied by a lawyer*. Cordun's presence at Slătioara encouraged the Old Calendarist movement. The report submitted by the regional authorities of Suceava declared that on the Sunday of Thomas, 1959 (May 10, 1959) more than three thousand people – many of them Orthodox Christians – had come to Slătioara in order to see Cordun¹⁷¹. Galaction Cordun died at Slătioara two months later (July 21, 1959)¹⁷².

III.3. Old Calendarism propagated into Transylvania and Wallachia

Old Calendarism largely owes its propagation into Transylvania to Abbot Evloghie Oța of Râmeți Monastery (1909–1979), a former Mount Athos dweller and abbot of Râmeți Monastery from 1940 onwards. In this capacity, he played an important role in reorganizing this place of worship, which had long fallen in a state of decay. The documents available are incomplete and until new information is found, it is impossible to ascertain the circumstances which prompted the abbot of Râmeți to embrace Old Calendarism. The following pages present what is known so far, in the hope that further clarifications will be provided in the future. In the year 1952, Abbot Evloghie was arrested and sent before the Aiud Court “under charges of indecent assault and sexual inversion”¹⁷³. It is impossible to tell whether these accusations were ill-founded or not, since in those terrible Stalinist years, criminal charges were fabricated against the persons who were targeted and thus blackmailed. The fact is that in late 1952, Abbot Evloghie was removed from his position and requested to move within forty-eight hours to Moisei Monastery, where he was to become a mere dweller¹⁷⁴.

On April 4, 1954, now-Monk Evloghie Oța alongside five monks of Râmeți Monastery (two priests and four rasophores) decided to adhere to Old Calendarism and sent a notification to the Romanian Orthodox Diocese of Alba Iulia and

¹⁷¹ The National Archives, records of the Religious Affairs Department, Directorate of Studies, File no. 4/1959. Based on information collected personally at the protopopiate conferences of Târgu Neamț and Fălticeni, f. 63.

¹⁷² *Ibidem*, f. 147 (Informative note on the death of the former Old Calendarist Metropolitan Galaction Cordun).

¹⁷³ The National Archives, records of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Directorate of Studies, File no. 1 bis/1954, f. 34.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibidem*, f. 34.

Sibiu. In its meeting of September 1, 1954, the Monastic Consistory of this eparchy discussed the case of Protosyncellus Evloghie Oța¹⁷⁵. He was summoned together with the other five monks and rasophores of the same monastery, but none of them appeared before this ecclesiastic body¹⁷⁶. The Consistory decided to have Evloghie Oța defrocked and excluded from monasticism, under charges of insubordination and disobedience to his legitimate superior, of schism and apostasy, and of involving other monks who had followed him. Moreover, the indictment showed that he had appropriated monastery's assets and had produced illegal documents, by stamping them with the title "Traditionalist Christian Cult [Cultul Creștin Tradiționalist]", although this cult was not acknowledged by the state¹⁷⁷. Two of the monks who had declared themselves to be followers of Oța – Hieromonk Damaschin Rotaru, and monk Daniil Zaharia, respectively, returned to the Orthodox Church, repenting for their mistake. The others, all of them rasophores, continued to side with Oța, and were consequently punished by being defrocked and excluded from the monastery.

On September 16, 1954, Evloghie Oța sent a notification to the Orthodox Diocese of Cluj, to declare that from April 4, 1954 onwards, the date when he had announced his turning to the Old Calendarist movement, the Church authorities no longer had jurisdiction over the monastery: "from that date on, you have ceased to exert any command over us, and we hereby categorically deny the unfounded authority that you have now presumed to extend over our monastery and its dwellers in an abusive, illegal manner"¹⁷⁸. By this notification, Evloghie Oța declared all decisions passed by the Church from April onwards to be null and void. Moreover, he claimed that the monastery had been built by its dwellers and by the faithful people of the surrounding villages, and as such it belonged to the parishioners and to the monks living there. The declaration was signed by Evloghie Oța, two hieromonks and two rasophores, as well as a number of faithful residing in the vicinity of the monastery.

An important role in propagating Old Calendarism in Transylvania was played by monk Ghenadie Marciu¹⁷⁹, a former dweller of St. John the Baptist Monastery

¹⁷⁵ Protosyncellus (rom. Protosinghel) is a senior priest in an Orthodox monastery, selected to assist the bishop with his administrative responsibilities.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibidem*, f. 27.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibidem*, f. 28

¹⁷⁸ *Ibidem*, f. 24.

¹⁷⁹ The National Archives, records of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Directorate of Studies, File no. 1 bis/1954, f. 185 (Report dated May 31, 1954).

in Alba Iulia, who had been defrocked in 1953 for disciplinary reasons¹⁸⁰. Once defrocked, he moved to Sebeș *raion* (the term designating an administrative division), where he continued to celebrate liturgical services and sought to acquire the reputation of a saintly man. He thus claimed to have been visited by Saint George, and then by the Holy Virgin. On May 15, 1954 he adhered to Old Calendarism, after he had engaged in extensive correspondence with Movileanu and Oța. However, later during the same year, he returned to the Orthodox Church: “In the hope of being accepted like the prodigal son of the Gospel, by the Orthodox Church which I had forsaken, I recant my declaration issued on May 15, 1954 before the (Ecclesiastical) Court of Sibiu and I will return to Râmeți Monastery, to regain my peace and contentment of soul”¹⁸¹. However, a report submitted on April 2, 1957 by the Rapporteurs’ Directorate [Direcția Împuterniciților] Hunedoara showed that in Sebeș raion, Sugag Village, there was a group of twenty to thirty Old Calendarist believers, led by the former monastic Ghenadie Marciu: “he has been excluded from monasticism, but visits the villages in the area, carrying out Old Calendarist propaganda, and keeps in touch with Movileanu from Panciu. He has been sued twice for wearing the monastic habit illegally, and both times he has been acquitted”¹⁸².

A house of prayer was also attested to exist in 1958 in Covasna County; it had church furnishings and hosted religious services celebrated according to the old calendar by Father Ioniță Toma, a former monk from Slătioara, ordained by Cordon¹⁸³. The local authorities of the respective village declared they had received “an order to leave him be”. The reports submitted by St. George Deanery and Covasna Parish show that the alleged priest, “Father” Toma I. Dumitru, holding no legal license or authorization, had opened a chapel, and had built a bell-tower with two bells, causing unrest among the devotees¹⁸⁴.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibidem*, 118. On the same matter, see the declaration sent by Prislop Monastery no. 36/1953 (f. 293), signed by the confessor priest and the abbess, showing how the events unfolded and indicating that Ghenadie Marciu had left Prislop Monastery wearing civilian clothes.

¹⁸¹ *Ibidem*, f. 26 Declaration given by Monk Ghenadie Marciu of Râmeți Monastery, addressed to Patriarch Justinian, by which he renounced the Old Calendarist affiliation (registered by the Patriarchal Administration office with no. 9802/1954).

¹⁸² The National Archives, records of the Religious Affairs Department, Directorate of Studies, File no. 2/1957 (April–December 1957), f. 4–9 (Report submitted by Father Gheorghe Perian of Sugag Village, on the activity of monk Ghenadie Marciu, February 18, 1957).

¹⁸³ The National Archives, records of the Religious Affairs Department, Directorate of Studies, File no. 2/1958, f. 221.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibidem*, f. 279.

The documents available do not provide a clear picture of the situation within the Archdiocese of Bucharest. It is known that immediately after the installation of the communist regime in Romania, the Old Calendarist skete of Sf. Gheorghe [St. George] was founded at Copăceni (1946), a village where a number of Old Calendarist families had been dwelling since the interwar period¹⁸⁵. This skete played an important role for the Old Calendarist hubs being established in Wallachia or Transylvania, because it was the place where Old Calendarists would “ordain” priests to dispatch them subsequently, wherever they were needed. On November 4, 1951, Priest-Monk Martinian Comănici of Copăceni Skete was delegated to “visit the villages of our parishes Codreni (Ilfov County), Movilița (Putna County), in order to celebrate religious services for the benefit of traditionalist Christians” (Appendix 19). On March 15, 1954, the Old Calendarists in Covasna County, *Târgu Secuiesc raion* submitted to the Ministry of Religious Affairs a request by which they sought approval for Emilian Pricop, a dweller at Copăceni Skete, to serve as a priest for the Old Calendarist communities in Covasna¹⁸⁶.

In May 1954 Martinian Comănici, as head of Copăceni Skete, demanded a license for the functioning of the respective skete. The Ministry answered that the requested license could not be issued, since the denomination was not acknowledged by the state. The situation created at Copăceni was to be investigated by the Ministry, in order to decide whether the skete’s dwellers should be prosecuted¹⁸⁷. “Hieromonk” Martinian Comănici, ordained by Galaction Cordon in April 1955, had been one of the participants in the 1936 events of Piatra Neamț, and subsequently placed in confinement at Cheia Monastery¹⁸⁸.

On June 20 1955, the steering committee of St. George Skete, chaired by “Hieromonk” Martinian Comănici, decided together with the skete’s dwellers and the devotees of Copăceni Village – given the lack of monastic personnel, and the fact that the skete stood on the land of an adherent to the Traditionalist Cult [Cultul Tradiționalist], Neculae Teodorescu – to terminate the monastic activity of St. George Skete and turn it into a parish church, property of the

¹⁸⁵ The National Archives, records of the Religious Affairs Department, Directorate of Studies, File no. 1/1954, f. 500–504 (Report on the situation in the Archdiocese of Bucharest).

¹⁸⁶ *Ibidem*, f. 85 (Informative note dated March 25, 1954).

¹⁸⁷ *Ibidem*, f. 158 (Report dated May 31 1954).

¹⁸⁸ The National Archives, records of the General Inspectorate of the Gendarmerie, File no. 22/1944, f. 1.

local community of faithful of the Traditionalist Christian Cult [Cultul Creștin Tradiționalist]¹⁸⁹.

After 1956, a number of documents signed by the leaders of the “Traditionalist Cult” indicated that the Slătioara group had begun to take control of this skete. One of the priests dispatched by the “Traditionalist Cult” to serve at Copăceni stated that on August 1, 1956 “without the agreement of the Organization and the People, a certain Evloghie Oța, recently released from prison, installed himself at this skete as self-appointed abbot, however without any elections being held and without the consent or endorsement of our skete”¹⁹⁰. The report showed that this priest “is carrying out a political campaign here at the skete, lobbying for the Organization of Titel Petrescu who he claims will become a minister, together with Ispir as Minister of Religious Affairs and with the former bishop Galaction Cordun”. On July 8, 1956, the same priest declared that the skete had been visited by a delegation from Titel Petrescu’s Organization: “Rumor has it that as soon as he rises to power, he will appoint Galaction as Metropolitan, and Evloghie as bishop at Copăceni”.

Copăceni Skete, as Ion Movileanu explained in a memorandum, “is a unit of our Christian Traditionalist Cult” that had lately been hijacked by certain recalcitrant persons, namely the defrocked Evloghie Oța. “Priests ordained by Cordun have been brought here and officiate the services untroubled. They are closely in touch with Slătioara and intend to set up a diocese here. We have demanded that the skete be closed down and turned into a parish church”¹⁹¹. In another report, Ion Movileanu declared that “our church at Copăceni” had become “a place which encourages and spawns agitation, in close connection to the monks of Slătioara... there is “a coalition Slătioara, Găgești and Copăceni, hostile to interdenominational concord and to public order”¹⁹².

The situation became tense at Copăceni when the Old Calendarist believers loyal to the Movileanu group took action. The rapporteur for Bucharest Region, in his report entitled “Developments at the Old Calendarist skete of Copăceni”

¹⁸⁹ The National Archives, records of the Department of Religious Affairs, Directorate of Studies, File no. 2 bis 2 (December 1957), f. 20.

¹⁹⁰ The National Archives, records of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Directorate of Studies, File 1/1956 (Report dated August 1, 1956 to the Christian Traditionalist Cult Organization [Organizația Cultului Creștin Tradiționalist], signed by hieromonk Grigoraș Cleopa (or Gleopa).

¹⁹¹ *Ibidem*, f. 359–363.

¹⁹² *Ibidem*, f. 144.

declared that on the feast day of the Dormition of the Mother of God (August 28, 1956) a conflict followed by altercations, broke out (in the presence of Evloghie Oța) between Nicolae Teodorescu – the owner of the plot of land on which the skete stood, and Monk Meletie Caranfil. The plot's owner wanted the skete to stop functioning and be turned into a parish church, in the hope that a young Old Calendarist priest would be brought over and marry his daughter. In his turn, Caranfil asked Slătioara to back him up, by sending eight monks to dwell at the skete, until the situation could be pacified¹⁹³.

Nicolae Teodorescu was one of the signatories of the memorandum sent by the leaders (steering committee) of the Traditionalist Church of Copăcenii to the president of the People's Court of Justice Vidra, demanding "to remove recalcitrant persons from the land owned by our Church – so-called monks and impostor priests, never confirmed by the Ministry of Religious Affairs nor acknowledged by the local bishop, who has jurisdiction over the territory. Although the minutes dated June 20, 1955 document the conversion of the former skete into a parish church, these fake monks refuse to leave the place, but instead they bring and install fake priests, ordained illegally by the former bishop Galaction Cordun"¹⁹⁴; "...these fake priests and recalcitrant monks put up resistance, because they abusively use our land and property, and on August 19 they were even prepared to start a fight with bludgeons they had brought inside the church, which prompted us to take legal action against them...."¹⁹⁵.

In early 1957, Copăcenii could be regarded as one of Slătioara fiefs. There, on January 19 1957, Evloghie Oța, wearing episcopal insignia, celebrated the Lord's Baptism according to the old calendar. During the service, he remembered Galaction Cordun as archbishop, while the concelebrant priests remembered Oța as their bishop (Appendix 20). At the end of the service, Oța praised before the faithful in attendance the freedom enjoyed by denominations in the People's Republic of Romania¹⁹⁶. For the 1958 patronal feast of Copăcenii Skete (May 6, 1958), the liturgy was celebrated by Dionisie Huguianu, who made false and defamatory statements about the Romanian Orthodox Church and its servants,

¹⁹³ *Ibidem*, f. 316 (Report submitted by the rapporteur of Bucharest Region: "Aspecte de la schitul stilist din Copăcenii [Developments at the Old Calendarist Skete of Copăcenii]").

¹⁹⁴ The National Archives, records of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Directorate of Studies, File no. 2 bis 2 (December 1957), f. 17.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibidem*, f. 18.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibidem*, f. 16 (Report no. 6/January 31 1957 submitted by the rapporteur of Bucharest Region).

claiming that he had personally petitioned Patriarch Aleksey I of Russia, asking him to intervene in favor of the Old Calendarists in Romania¹⁹⁷.

“Puțul Înalt” church became one of Old Calendarist hubs in Bucharest, after Aurel Vasilescu was appointed as parish priest, on September 1, 1948. Aurel Vasilescu had been the confessor (military chaplain) of the Tudor Vladimirescu Infantry Division¹⁹⁸ (or of Division Horia, Cloșca, Crișan according to other documents¹⁹⁹), and had returned to Romania with the rank of major²⁰⁰. In 1948, after the dissolution of the military clergy, he demanded to work in Bucharest, his reasoning being that his wife was part of the Ministry of Forestry staff, and his son was attending school in Bucharest.

After his appointment, it was found that Father Vasilescu had actually divorced and that he was living with another woman, as his former wife confirmed. The priest refused to provide any explanations to the Archdiocese of Bucharest, and consequently he was suspended. As he continued to serve, he was summoned before the Consistory (the diocesan court), which defrocked him. On July 31, 1952, the epitropos and the council of Puțul Înalt II Parish in Bucharest, signed the minutes of a meeting where they decided to leave the Orthodox rite, in order to join the “old-rite Orthodoxy” (Appendix 21). It is unclear whether they referred to the so-called old-rite Christians (the Lipovans), acknowledged by the Romanian State (cf. the “Official Gazette/Monitorul Oficial” no. 119/May 1947)²⁰¹, or to

¹⁹⁷ The National Archives, records of the Department of Religious Affairs, Directorate of Studies, File no. 2/1958, f. 208–210.

¹⁹⁸ The National Archives, records of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Directorate of Studies, File no. 1 bis/1954, f. 8–9, Declaration of priests Andrei Costinescu (Înălțarea Domnului/Lord’s Ascension Parish), Grigore Popescu (Sf. Haralambie/Saint Charalambos Parish of Belu) and Chiru Zaharia (Sf. Cuv. Paraschiva/Blessed Paraskevi Parish) on the situation of Puțul Înalt II Parish and on the defrocked priest Aurel Vasilescu.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibidem*, f. 62 (Report dated March 8, 1954).

²⁰⁰ The “Tudor Vladimirescu” Division (full name: Romanian 1st Volunteer Infantry Division ‘Tudor Vladimirescu – Debrecen’) was a Soviet-organized division of Romanians that fought against Germany and Hungary during the final years of World War II. Named after Tudor Vladimirescu, the leader of the Wallachian uprising of 1821, the division was formed from Romanian prisoners of war in October 1943. In late 1945 the division was integrated into the Romanian 4th Army. Relentlessly politicized by their communist leaders, the “Tudor Vladimirescu” Division became a politically reliable military formation of the Romanian communists. Along with another Romanian communist units and backed by tens of thousands of Red Army troops, the “Tudor Vladimirescu” Division played a key role in imposing communist rule in Romania after the war.

²⁰¹ The National Archives, records of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Directorate of Studies, File no. 3/1952, f. 83.

the Old Calendarists. It is known, however, that in 1953 the defrocked priest Aurel Vasilescu made an unsuccessful attempt to join the Lipovans, and in 1954 he was already signing documents as “General Secretary” of Movileanu’s organization. In this capacity, he also signed the document by which two Old Calendarist associations merged in 1954, as well as another by which bishop Galaction Cordon announced to the Romanian Patriarchate that he had joined the Old Calendarists in 1955. In the spring of 1956, the former priest Aurel Vasilescu returned to the Orthodox Church. Several of his petitions, still extant, addressed to the archdiocese of Bucharest stated that he had no sufficient income, as he was working as a chanter, and asked the archdiocese of Bucharest to create for him an administrative position, such as a choir conductor, so that he might be paid from the parish funds²⁰².

It has not yet been ascertained the extent of Aurel Vasilescu’s contribution to the propagation of Old Calendarism in the Archdiocese of Bucharest, as a confessor priest for a regiment coming into the country alongside the Soviet tanks. The aim of voluntary divisions was, as it is known, to take control of the states where the Red Army entered and to impose a regime modelled on the Soviet one there, as was the goal pursued by Moscow. It is significant that on February 9 1944, the Patriarch of Russia ordained three priests from among the Romanian prisoners, who were mere soldiers without any theological training, consecrated the new military flags and released the troops from their old oaths to King Michael I (1940–1947) and the Kingdom of Romania.²⁰³

This leads back to Ana Pauker, the one who together with Vasile Luca, personally conducted the propaganda among the Romanian prisoners in camps, in order to recruit volunteers for military divisions. On November 15 1943, with Stalin’s “blessing”, the volunteer infantry Division “Tudor Vladimirescu” was established – a military unit of the Soviet NKVD, comprising nine thousand men under the command of Colonel Mihai Maltopol, Lieutenant Colonel Nicolae

²⁰² The National Archives, records of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Directorate of Studies, File no. 1/1956, f. 9 (Note 357 dated January 23 1956 from the Ministry of Religious Affairs to the Directorate of Rapporteurs).

²⁰³ When Romania entered the war, it was a monarchy, led by King Michael I, and thus all soldiers pledged allegiance accordingly. These Romanian prisoners of war in Soviet Russia had been ordained as priests by the Patriarch of Russia, who, at the same time, released them from the oath of allegiance to the king. The purpose of this manoeuvre was for them, once they returned to Romania with the Soviet occupation regime, to contribute to the installation of the communist regime in Romania, obeying only the orders of the Soviet commanders.

Cambrea and Colonel Iacob Teclu²⁰⁴. On April 12 1945 a new division of Romanian volunteers named “Horia Cloșca și Crișan” was created, under the political command of Valter Roman, who since 1939 had been in Moscow, working for the Romanian-language program of Radio Moscow. In this context, it is still to be ascertained whether Father Aurel Vasilescu returned to Romania on a state-sponsored or directed mission to support the new communist regime, or whether his joining the Old Calendarists was the result of a personal decision.

Finally, we note that in December 1956, in the Prahova villages of Aricești-Zeletin, Surani and Cărbunești, three itinerant monks were organizing religious meetings. One of them was the abbot of the Old Calendarist St. Demetrios Skete in Ileana Village (close to Bucharest), another was a deacon at the same skete, while the third was a monk. With the permission of the parish priest, they officiated the liturgy in the Orthodox church for its patronal feast (Saint Nicholas), with a laudatory presentation from the part of the priest. They stayed until December 15, visiting the villagers and asking for money donations, claiming that they intended to build a church in Ileana village, near Bucharest, but the state would not offer any financial support for this²⁰⁵.

III.4. Old Calendarism and the communist regime: aspects of a controversial relationship

In 1948 the Old Calendarists, through Ion Movileanu, declared themselves satisfied with their situation in the religious landscape of the Romanian Popular Republic: “*in today’s circumstances, when dictatorship has fallen and democracy with its many freedoms has been restored, we are able to practice our faith freely. There are churches, priests, cemeteries wherever Old Calendarist believers are –*

²⁰⁴ Information provided by the War Journal of Tudor Vladimirescu Division. See Ilie Manole, *Clerul militar al României între presiunea și opresiunea regimului [The Military Clergy of Romania between the Pressure and Oppression of the Regime]*, in *Anul 1947 – Căderea Cortinei [1947 – The Curtain Falls]*. Contributions to the Symposium of Sighetul Marmăției (June 20–22 1997), Fundația Alianța Civică, 1997, pp. 363–366; On Tudor Vladimirescu Division, see Florin Șperlea, *O divizie pentru liniștea comuniștilor români [A Division for the Convenience of Romanian Communists]*, (<http://www.isciv.ro/Cele-mai-citite/o-divizie-pentru-linistea-comunistilor-romani-tudor-vladimirescu.html>)

²⁰⁵ The National Archives, records of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, File no. 1/1956 (January–December 1956), f. 548 (Note 1263/December 17 1956: “Manifestări ale cultului ortodox în comuna Aricești Zeletin, raion Teleajen [Actions of the Orthodox Cult in Aricești Zeletin, raion Teleajen]”)

in brief, we are content with our freedom”²⁰⁶. In a monograph sent by Evloghie Oța to an Old Calendarist of Isaccea (March 9, 1957), where he declared his intention to ordain priests (he only needed to know whether in the respective villages he could find peasants who had completed seven years of school education, or at least who could read and write), he was writing: “*Indeed faith is granted freedom by our party, long may it live, for we the Old Calendar believers, absolutely owe our freedom only to the communist authorities*” (Appendix 22)²⁰⁷.

The archive documents dating from 1945–1955, catch the reader’s interest due to paradoxical aspects in the evolution of the Old Calendarist movement during those years of the harsh Stalinist regime, as well as in the relationship between the Old Calendarist leaders and the local or central state authorities. It is important to mention the massive correspondence exchanged between the leaders of the Old Calendarist Movement, self-entitled “The Traditionalist Christian Cult [Cultul Creștin Tradiționalist]” or “The Eastern Right-Worshipping [i.e, Orthodox] Cult [Cultul Pravoslavnic de Răsărit]” and the Ministry of Religious Affairs and other state institutions, by which Old Calendarists sought to obtain recognition. We note that the state authorities answered very politely every time – which is unusual for the respective period – reminding them that they were not an acknowledged denomination.

In their turn, the local authorities in the villages with Old Calendarist dwellers assisted them by providing recommendations to be attached to their petitions. For instance, the mayor of Furceni Village, at the request of the “Traditionalist Christian Cult”, stated: “*their attitude towards the Popular Democracy Regime is that of dutiful, compliant citizens, who do their patriotic duty to the state by paying their taxes and fees, and volunteering, and who observe all the decisions and commands issued by our Party and Government, participating in the meetings called by the local authorities*”²⁰⁸. Such testimonies or characterizations were issued by several mayors of the villages with Old Calendarist dwellers.

²⁰⁶ The National Archives, records of the Department of Religious Affairs, Directorate of Studies, File 1/1948, f. 20 („Memoriu. Istoricul pe scurt al Organizației Cultului Creștin Tradiționalist din R.P. Română [Memorandum. A brief history of the Traditionalist Christian Cult Organization in the People’s Republic of Romania]”).

²⁰⁷ The National Archives, records of the Department of Religious Affairs, Directorate of Studies. File no. 2 bis 2 (December 1957), f. 39–40.

²⁰⁸ The National Archives, records of the Department of Religious Affairs, Directorate of Studies. File no. 1 bis/1954, f. 11.

In February 1954, Old Calendarist adherents in Tîmboiești Village, Râmnicu Sărat County addressed the Central Committee of the Romanian Workers' Party (PMR) and the Council of Ministers of the Romanian People's Republic, requesting a license to build a house of prayer²⁰⁹. The answer received from the Central Committee stated that "*the Old Calendarist religious group self-entitled "Traditionalist Christian Cult" does not hold a legal authorization to operate and consequently the request is denied. Mere observance of the old calendar is not sufficient reason to acknowledge this group as a denomination in its own right*"²¹⁰. Similar requests were also made by other Old Calendarist groups, such as those of Ciumulești Village, Fălticeni County or Rotunda Village, Liteni, Fălticeni County²¹¹.

Moreover, the Old Calendarists even sent petitions to president Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, and even secured an audience with him on June 9, 1954, in the presence of the Minister of Religious Affairs, Petre Constantinescu-Iași (1953–1957). The delegation including Dionisie Huguianu, Meftodie Marinache and Emilian Pricop, submitted a memorandum stating that "*for the first time in the Romanian People's Republic, after 30 years of suffering, we are now able to speak of the injustice meted out to us, in front of the greatest and most beloved son of the working class, who is willing to grant us freedom as long as we do not act against the state, for it is not possible that the loyal, honest sons of the Romanian People's Republic should suffer under a popular democratic regime. Every person ought to be free to worship as they choose – embracing the new calendar, the old calendar, or any other form of the faith*"²¹².

A notable event is the enforcement of decree no. 410/1959, obliging monastics to leave their monasteries²¹³. As it is known, between 1948–1958, the Orthodox monasteries were closely supervised by the so-called State Security [Securitate] –

²⁰⁹ *Ibidem*, f. 85 (Informative note dated March 25, 1954).

²¹⁰ *Ibidem*, f. 83 (Note 957/ 1954 dated February 26, 1954).

²¹¹ The National Archives, records of the Department of Religious Affairs, Directorate of Studies, File no. 1 1953, f. 77 (Note 19801/1953 dated December 10, 1953).

²¹² The National Archives, records of the Department of Religious Affairs, Directorate of Studies, File no. 1 bis/1954, f. 337 (Memorandum submitted by the "Group of Old Calendar Orthodox Christians to Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej", on April 27, 1954).

²¹³ On October 28, 1959, the Great National Assembly Presidium passed Decree no. 410, amending Decree no. 177/1948 for the general regime of religious denominations. The stipulations of Decree no. 410 were enforced retroactively with devastating effects on the monastic life in Romania. The estimated number of monastics obliged to leave their monasteries is 4,750. It is less widely known, however, that Patriarch Justinian protected these monks and found work for them, within the Archdiocese of Bucharest.

the state's secret police agency. Two documents issued by the Ministry of Religious Affairs (respectively August 28 and September 16 1958), proposed that *“gradually and very cautiously, the following aims must be pursued: forbidding the establishment of new monasteries and sketes; reducing the number of monasteries and sketes; reducing the economic resources available to monasteries; the right to admit new members into the monastery should be granted only to bishops; itinerant bishops as well as itinerant monks will be banned from travelling”*²¹⁴. The opposition of bishops and monks who attempted to resist these measures, led to the issue of the infamous Decree no. 410/28 October 1959. Thus, out of the 224 monasteries existing on November 1, 1959, only 194 were still functioning by the time Decree 410 was issued. Of them, ninety-two were closed down between January 1 1959 and March 31 1960. Out of the 6,014 monastics existing on January 1 1959, 2,975 were forced to leave their monasteries between January 1 1959 and March 31 1960.

Under these circumstances, the construction of the Old Calendarist skete of Slătioara, which had started in 1947, utterly contradicted the communist regime's policy and its attitude towards denominations²¹⁵. A secretary in the Department of Religious Affairs noted the fact that while “measures aimed to purge the Orthodox monasteries of all hostile elements” were being taken, in northern Moldavia there were eleven Old Calendarist monasteries, with around 266 dwellers – both monks and nuns “with no legal authorization” (May 14 1959). Regarding their refusal to comply with Decree no. 410/1959, a representative of the local authorities also noted: “Old Calendarists assert that this decree does not concern them. The fake bishop Glicherie Tănase himself has made this statement before the regional authority, arguing that their churches and parish priests' houses are built by them at their own expense and (without any support from the state who has nothing to do with us), because they do not receive any salary or any other kind of subsidy”²¹⁶.

Moreover, the former bishop Galaction Cordon had been heard to say that the Romanian Orthodox Church was going to be abolished and that the Great National Assembly had tasked him with organizing an Old Calendar Church.

²¹⁴ George Enache, Adrian Nicolae Petcu, *Monahismul ortodox și puterea comunistă în România anilor 50 [Orthodox Monasticism and the Communist Power in 1950s Romania]*, Partener Publishing House, 2009, p. 45.

²¹⁵ The National Archives, records of the Department of Religious Affairs, Directorate of Studies, File no. 1 bis/1954, fila 48; „Catacombele Ortodoxiei”, no. 2/May 1999.

²¹⁶ The National Archives, records of the Department of Religious Affairs, Directorate of Studies, File no. 2/1960, f. 63.

“Many of the monks removed from the Orthodox monasteries are very likely to seek refuge in the Old Calendarist ones”, noted the same member of the Department of Religious Affairs²¹⁷. Patriarch Justinian was also aware of this possible outcome. A document issued by the state’s secret police agency [Securitate] dated May 28 1959 reads: “Justinian Marina considers that the flight of Galaction Cordun to Slătioara is related to the alleged hostile intentions of the state authorities against the Romanian Orthodox Church. He considers that the authorities aim to strengthen Old Calendarism, which will provide them the leverage to undermine Orthodoxy. In this respect, he has made the following statement: “I am convinced that certain persons belonging to the Department of Religious Affairs knew about Galaction Cordun and the path he was directed on. I am sure of this, because I have been informed that certain persons are working to strengthen the Old Calendarist movement, in the hope that this will be able to undermine the Romanian Orthodox Church. Driving the monks away from monasteries, only a few months prior to the flight of Galaction Cordun from Căldărușani, was an act carefully calculated so that they would turn to the Old Calendarists and seek refuge in the Old Calendarist monasteries and sketes. The fact that Cordun and the Old Calendarists became active again, at the time when hundreds of monks and nuns have been removed from monasteries and convents – thus becoming a target for Old Calendarists and especially for those who persecute the Romanian Orthodox Church, can give impetus to the Old Calendarist movement and bring it many adherents among the peasants, and even give rise to social unrest”²¹⁸.”

The Old Calendarist leaders’ relationship with the state’s secret police (Securitate) during the period of 1950–1960 is another controversial issue worth investigating. The official history of the “Old Calendar Church of Romania [Biserica de Stil Vechi din Romania]” presents an incident that occurred in May 1955, shortly after Cordun’s “enthronement” at Slătioara. The History of Slătioara Monastery reads: “A few days later, delegates from the Romanian State Security [Securitate] arrived at Slătioara Monastery and announced metropolitan Galaction that from then on,

²¹⁷ The National Archives, records of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Directorate of Studies, File no. 4/1959, f. 61–62.

²¹⁸ Moraru Frusinica, *Biserica Ortodoxă în luptă cu diavolul roșu [The Orthodox Church Fighting the Red Devil]*, “Altarul Banatului” journal, no. 1–3/2001, pp. 94–95, apud Archives of S.R.I [Romanian Intelligence Service], records collection D, file 7729, f. 443. See also Adrian Nicolae Petcu, *Documente privind atitudinea Patriarhului Justinian față de aplicarea decretului 410/1959 [Documents on the Attitude of Patriarch Justinian Towards Decree 410/1959]*, “Caietele CNSAS [Selected Records of CNSAS – the National Council for the Study of the State Security Archives]”, year II, no. 2 (4), 2009, pp. 333–344.

he was forbidden from dwelling in this monastery. The metropolitan retorted: “I am Romanian and it is my right to live in any place on Romanian territory”. The delegation failed to achieve their goal, and Metropolitan Galaction Cordon remained at Slătioara Monastery, despite the fact that the entire department of Security was monitoring him”²¹⁹.

This is an idyllic portrayal of a feeble, powerless secret police of the 1950s–1960s. However, as it is widely known, at this time the most redoubtable communist prisons held many priests, monastics and believers belonging to the Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic Churches and other denominations, serving hard labor sentences as political detainees, many of them even dying in prison. Research carried out by the National Institute for the Study of Totalitarianism has identified 1,888 Orthodox priests in communist prisons, most of them dying in detention²²⁰. The State Security would make virtually no concessions when they intended to arrest a person, especially during the respective period.

Another incident occurred in August 1955, when Bishop Galaction Cordon and Father Glicherie Tănase were brought to the State Security [Securitate] headquarters in Ploiești, in order to be interrogated. Both were placed in confinement: Cordon at Cernica Monastery, and Glicherie under house arrest in Răchitoasa Village, in the Bărăgan Plain²²¹. As mentioned above, Bishop Galaction Cordon was able to leave the so-called “confinement” at will and performed ordinations at Copăceni Monastery and at the church of Moara Domnească Village, near Bucharest, both places of worship observing the old calendar. At Moara he consecrated Father Glicherie Tănase as a bishop, after the latter had also returned unbothered from his “house arrest” in Bărăgan. Soon afterwards, Glicherie Tănase “escaped” definitively and arrived at Slătioara in 1956. A report submitted by the rapporteur of Fălticeni Region noted that the Old Calendarists were stirring again, since Glicherie had become free and returned on November 1, 1956²²².

²¹⁹ *Istoria Mănăstirii Slătioara [History of Slătioara Monastery]*, pp. 131–132.

²²⁰ The National Institute for the Study of Totalitarianism, *The Imprisoned Church. Romania, 1944–1989*, Bucharest, 1999, p. 15; *Martiri pentru Hristos din România în perioada regimului comunist [Martyrs for Christ in Romania Under the Communist Regime]*, EIBMBOR, Bucharest, 2007 (contains the biographies of 240 Christian martyrs who laid down their lives for Christ under the communist regime – most of them Orthodox priests, bishops, professors of theology and monastics).

²²¹ *Istoria Mănăstirii Slătioara [History of Slătioara Monastery]*, p. 120, pp. 136–139; Constantin Bujor, *op.cit.*, pp. 42; 44–46.

²²² Department of Religious Affairs, Directorate of Studies, File no. 2/1957, f. 769–772. (Report no. 1809/December 15 1956). He proposed that the Ministry of Religious Affairs, together with

Neither of these two leaders of the Old Calendarist movement knew the infamous communist prisons. The Old Calendarist apologist Constantin Bujor made a relevant remark on Bishop Glicherie Tănase: “Two documents dating from this period demonstrate the seriousness of the abuse, and the breaching of human rights under a totalitarian communist regime, bearing much resemblance to the Nazi one or to a military dictatorship. One of them is the release order no. 417 dating from 1955 (for those in pre-trial detention). It bears the header: R.P.R. [The Romanian People’s Republic], Ministry of Internal Affairs, The General Directorate of Penitentiaries, 1955, August 2. The word „penitentiary” is crossed out, and replaced by a handwritten note reading: „house arrest at Răchitoasa”. The dotted lines where the number of the arrest warrant, as well as the offense committed, should have been written, are blank as the respective information was not filled in. This indicates that Father Glicherie was in pre-trial detention, rather than being sued for a crime punishable by the Penal (Criminal) Code. This release order was tantamount to a court sentence, because its possessor had to stay in house arrest at Răchitoasa. He was not to be judged by any court of justice. In conclusion: the State Security would arrest one, sentence one, and release one, however imposing the house arrest penalty”²²³. From Slătioara, Bishop Glicherie later organized Galaction Cordun’s “escape” in 1959, aided by a lawyer named Albu from Bucharest, by Mircea Ispir, and by the devotee Pavel Mogârzan. The same Constantin Bujor noted: “An escape was difficult and only an intelligent action could deceive the jail guards. Lawyer Albu pretended to be a Security [secret police] officer (*it is known that false impersonation was a criminal offense very harshly punished at the time*) and took the Metropolitan to Bucharest under the pretext of an interrogation. From there, he was brought to Slătioara Monastery by Father Pavel. Following his escape, the Patriarchate informed the State Security, which was alarmed and looking for him everywhere” (Bujor, p. 47). Interestingly, the Security immediately arrested the accomplices in the “escape”, lawyer Albu and Pavel Mogârzan, but was unable to seize the “escapee”.

the Ministry of Internal Affairs, should take action preventing monks from wandering from place to place; that the fake priests and monks should be brought before the court again for re-trial; thirdly, it proposed for consideration the possibility to evacuate the two Old Calendarist sketes located in Fălticeni administrative unit (raion), so that the dwellers could be isolated from each other, “because by so doing the Old Calendarist problem would cease being a problem”, bringing instead the most loyal Orthodox monks as new dwellers, in order to meet the religious needs of the Old Calendarist believers.

²²³ Constantin Bujor, *op.cit.*, p. 46.

Admittedly, a number of Old Calendarist monks were sued for “performing religious services and wearing the uniform [monastic habit] illegitimately”. However, most cases were dropped for lack of evidence, and others received a few months’ or maximum one year’s suspended sentences. Such was the case of Hieromonk Jora Vasile, ordained on June 7, 1955 by Bishop Galaction Cordun at Slătioara Monastery, and acquitted by the Court of Justice which justified this decision by declaring that he had been well intentioned and had not known that Galaction Cordun no longer held the right to perform ordinations²²⁴. Another case in point is the 1958 trial of a group of four Old Calendarists headed by Meftodie Marinache, at Panciu. The accused presented ordination documents signed by Cordun, and the Court accepted them and decided that they were not guilty of wearing the uniform illegally²²⁵. Another trial ended up with the release of Monk Ieremia Nicolae a few days before the court judgment was scheduled, under the pretext that “his issue is not very serious”. On the respective day, the monk did not appear before the Court, but instead he sent some of the Old Calendarist believers to testify about his good intentions. Finally, it was decided that the file was incomplete and the trial was postponed²²⁶.

The Old Calendarist movement was supported by a great number of lawyers who collaborated in drafting the petitions submitted to the state authorities and who defended the Old Calendarists during the trials. The most prominent such lawyer was Petre Pandrea (1904–1968), whose actual name was Petre Marcu, a brother-in-law of Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu (married to Elisa, the sister of Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu) who during the interwar period defended many communists who

²²⁴ The National Archives, records of the Department of Religious Affairs, Directorate of Studies, File 1/1956, f. 402. The rapporteur for Iași Region noted on April 2, 1957: “The so-called priest Jora Vasile, who was acquitted for the third time by the People’s Court of Justice of Podul Iloaiei, Târgu Frumos *raion*, is currently at liberty and continues to officiate religious services regularly, at the Old Calendar church in Balș.... Having learned of the imprisonment of monk Ieremia Nicolae known as Natan, currently under arrest at Vaslui Penitentiary, he no longer ventures to travel to other villages or towns within Iași *raion*, in order to avoid local authorities, because he has been seized by local authorities several times so far. However, he has been released as the *respective authorities had not yet received any precise orders in the Old Calendarist matter*. Following the arrest of the above-mentioned Old Calendarist monk of Negrești *raion*, Old Calendarist Jora Vasile demanded his followers to guard him, and carry bludgeons in the event that local authorities attempted to seize him” (File 2/1957, f. 10–14).

²²⁵ The National Archives, records of the Department of Religious Affairs, Directorate of Studies, File 4/1959, f. 32

²²⁶ The National Archives, records of the Department of Religious Affairs, Directorate of Studies, File 2 bis/1957.

were brought before the Court for trials²²⁷. Under the communist regime, he defended the Old Calendarists, the Greek Catholics, and the nuns of Vladimirești²²⁸. This is what Pandrea wrote on his stance in favor of the Old Calendarists: “*The Old Calendarist affair caused me to lose my honorary pavilion at Peleş, amounting to a net loss of 12,000 lei, plus the outstanding payments of Meftodie, Agatanghel and Copăceni... Admittedly, I was not interested in money. I did my duty as a lawyer with enthusiasm, zeal and in a state of euphoria. I was only interested in gaining fame and experience. What I obtained was a rather dubious glory in the circles of a religious sect, fanatics and freaks, plus the antagonism of the priests in the dominant Orthodox church...*”²²⁹.

During a trial, Pandrea declared that Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej had been imprisoned together with Old Calendarist believers, so Dej knew about their plight and that he had promised to allow complete freedom to the Old Calendarists²³⁰. In 1958 he even sent a memorandum to Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, “on the issue of the religious persecution against the Orthodox Christian sect known as Old Calendarism”. In this memorandum, he denounced the new persecution launched against the Old Calendarist movement, following which Copăceni Monastery had been closed down and several criminal cases had been filed against Old Calendarist

²²⁷ In general, Pandrea pleaded in favor of persons or organizations in precarious positions at a particular point in time (the Communist Party in Romania until 1944, the Jews, the National Peasants’ Party between 1953–1958, the nuns of Vladimirești etc). He was arrested four times between 1940–1944, but never spent more than eight days in prison. After the communists rose to power in Romania, Pandrea did ten years’ hard labour in prison, between 1948–1952 and 1958–1964. He was part of the Pătrășcanu group and sentenced to twenty years’ imprisonment, of which he served seven years in the Ocnele Mari prison. Between 1954–1958 he wrote *Memoriile mandarinului valah [Memoirs of a Wallachian Mandarin]*, confiscated by the secret police [Securitate] and published by his family in the year 2000 at Albatros Publishing House.

²²⁸ The National Archives, records of the Department of Religious Affairs, Directorate of Studies, File no. 2/ 1957, f. 505 (Note 94/August 22 1957 issued by the Cabinet of the Minister of Internal Affairs on the activity of lawyer Petre Pandrea of College V in the Bucharest). After defending the “Vladimirești” case (March 9, 1955), he was dismissed from the Bar and suspended temporarily. During the trial he wed Eliza Pătrășcanu, with Mother Veronica and Father Ioan Iovan as godparents (Petre Pandrea, *Memoriile mandarinului valah*, Albatros, 2000, XVIII).

²²⁹ Petre Pandrea, *op.cit.*, p. 136.

²³⁰ The National Archives, records of the Department of Religious Affairs, Directorate of Studies, File no. 2/1957, f. 521. A report sent by the Ministry of Religious Affairs to the Ministry of Internal Affairs (no. 94/August 22 1957) stated: “He is ill-intentioned in agitating the Old Calendarists, leading them to believe that their movement could be acknowledged by the state if it weren’t for the antagonism of certain “hooligans” in Ministry of Religious Affairs” (*Ibidem*, f. 505).

priests. He also requested that their license be renewed from March 1, 1948 onward, and the religious freedom to be ensured for the Old Calendarist cult “which operates semi-clandestinely”,²³¹.

It is worth mentioning that during this period, the Old Calendarist movement continued to build new places of worship, guarded by its own members, and also to submit petitions denouncing alleged “persecutions” against them. Thus the Old Calendarist devotees in the village of Slătioara, Râșca submitted a number of petitions to the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party, demanding among others *“to put and end to the trials and sentencing of Old Calendarist priests, and allow them freedom of worship, as they side with the Eastern Church, respectively with the Soviet Union, rather than siding with the West and the Catholics, as the Orthodox Church does”*.

Such a lenient attitude, so paradoxical for those times, allows the conclusion that the Old Calendarist movement was largely tolerated by the communist leaders of Romania. This reality is worth investigating in order to ascertain its reasons and the extent to which it was directed against, and intended to undermine, the Romanian Orthodox Church.

It is also very interesting to look into the attitude of the regional rapporteurs of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, tasked with monitoring the Old Calendarist movements, who witnessed the events and would regularly send in reports, together with their proposed solutions to various situations²³². The documents drafted by these rapporteurs very rarely described the Old Calendarists as “enemies of the Popular Democratic regime”, as evil, violent, immoral. Only two such reports

²³¹ The National Archives, records of the Ministry of Culture and Religious Affairs, Directorate of Studies, File 1/ 1958, f 193–194.

²³² The position of rapporteur to the Ministry of Religious Affairs had been created according to the Soviet model, in order to monitor and control the denominations. These persons enforced the state’s policy and demands concerning religious denominations at local level, and provided information on the denominations’ activity, based on which the regime’s policy was established or amended. During the first transition period, which lasted until 1952, these positions were held by persons involved in Church life in one way or another, in many cases even having a theological education. Later, these persons were replaced by communists loyal to the regime, whose background allowed them to analyze situations, grasp their importance, and often solve many problems without asking for the intervention of the Ministry or of local administrative bodies, deciding on the possibility to apply the directives issued by central (state) authorities. (See Sorin Ilieșiu, *Regimul comunist și cultele religioase [The Communist Regime and Religious Denominations]* in “Raportul final al Comisiei prezidențiale pentru Analiza Dictaturii Comuniste din România [Final Report of the Presidential Commission for the Study of the Communist Dictatorship in Romania]”, published in Supliment, “Revista 22”, no. 188, March 21 2006, available online at <http://www.scribd.com/doc/129408/CAPITOLUL-III>).

could be identified. One of them notes that X, a leader of the Old Calendarist community of Ciumulești Village, did not surrender the required amount of agricultural products (the “quota” levied by the state), although he was able to do so; that Y, who owned a house with several rooms, had refused to cede them to the state authorities who intended to install the agricultural cooperative’s shop, but instead he demolished his house overnight, claiming it was too old and too large, and consequently he was arrested and sent before the Court; that Z, another Old Calendarist, had killed a neighbour’s calf with an axe, because the animal had taken a mouthful of his hay (an instance of cruelty and malicious intent); that W, a fervent Old Calendarist, had deceived an old woman and a disabled man into selling him their land excessively cheaply, etc²³³. The other report describes the Old Calendarist believers as uncooperative: “The Old Calendarists are very recalcitrant and continue to refuse to have their photos attached to their identity documents, claiming that photos are the seal of Antichrist and they would rather accept torture, than yield to Satan. They also fail to attend the meetings organized by the House of Culture [a term designating a clubhouse in the former Soviet Union and other Eastern Bloc countries] and the People’s Council [Sfatul Popular – local elective, deliberative and executive public authority] and they are generally hostile to our regime”²³⁴.

Most rapporteurs, however, declared that the Old Calendarists did their duties to the state by surrendering the mandatory “quota” (specified amounts of agricultural products), paying their taxes, and abstaining from any hostile actions²³⁵. What the local rapporteurs noted in their reports were the acts or attitudes breaching the state’s laws, such as wearing the priestly uniform (vestments) illegally, since theirs was not an acknowledged denomination, or engaging in unauthorized construction works.

To some of the local rapporteurs, it was hard to understand the authorities’ lack of reaction to the Old Calendarist issue: “We were greatly surprised by the fact that when questioned, the chief prosecutor of Fălticeni *raion* [administrative unit] dared to justify all misdemeanours and offences related to the trials of Old

²³³ The National Archives, records of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Directorate of Studies, File no. 1 bis/1954, filele 53–56.

²³⁴ The National Archives, records of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Directorate of Studies, File 1/1953, f. 58 (Informative note from Bacău regional rapporteur, August 22 1953).

²³⁵ The National Archives, records of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, File no. 1/1956, f. 589 (Report submitted by the Galați regional rapporteur, December 31 1956).

Calendarist monks, by claiming that he had mistaken the “old believers” (Lipovans – also known as Old Ritualists] for the Old Calendarists... Not to mention that certain files of Old Calendarist monks were concealed and investigations were hindered, without anyone’s knowledge...” “We have also found that *both the prosecutors and the Court (at raion and region level) received orders to let them be, because these were the political directions*” (emphasis ours)²³⁶.

An incredible situation was created in 1956: a group of Old Calendarist monks sued the former Inspector General of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Gheorghe Lefter, claiming that he had confiscated certain documents, which authorized them to perform religious services. Consequently, the former inspector was interrogated at Focșani Prosecutor’s Office about the alleged abuse. When the Ministry of Religious Affairs notified Focșani Prosecutor’s Office that the Old Calendarists were not an acknowledged denomination, the prosecutor replied that he had not been aware of this fact, and that he had acted in accordance with the law²³⁷. In the same year, 1956, the statistics based on the rapporteurs’ findings indicated that the total number of Old Calendarist adherents was 5,134, with the greatest number of families residing in the regions of Bacău and Suceava, respectively. Also according to the regional reports, in the year 1957, 181 Old Calendarist believers held public positions (presidents of the Popular Council [Sfat Popular – local elective, deliberative and executive authority], presidents of agricultural cooperatives, hospital directors, assistant agronomists), thirty-three of which were members of the local Romanian Worker’s Party local organizations²³⁸.

The reports submitted periodically by the local rapporteurs to the Ministry of Religious Affairs indicate that throughout the entire communist era, Old Calendarism adherents were closely monitored, like any other denominations in Romania: their number, the situation of their parishes, monasteries and sketes, the names of the laypersons who were carrying out propaganda, were all on record.

²³⁶ *Ibidem*, f. 529 (Report submitted by Suceava regional rapporteur, no. 1799/December 13 1956).

²³⁷ The National Archives, records of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Directorate of Studies, File no. 2 bis 2/1957, f. 6 (Notification no. 1157/1957); *Ibidem*, f. 5.

²³⁸ The National Archives, records of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Directorate of Studies, File 2/1957, f 592 („List of the lay Old Calendarists holding public positions, and remunerated by the State, September 1 1957”), *Ibidem*, “Old Calendarist Propagandists who are Members of Romanian Worker’s Party Local Organizations”.

A report dated 1981, entitled *Notes on the current activity of religious denominations in our country*, contains the following remarks on the “anarchist Old Calendarist group”²³⁹: “Despite the fact that its existence is illegal, almost all its thirty churches and chapels existing in the above-mentioned counties have been permanently open, as well as their two monasteries and two sketes in the counties of Suceava and Neamț... *Paradoxically, although this group is illegal, almost all its churches remain open, and its pseudo-priests officiate religious services publicly and openly, at times with great ostentation, without any intervention from the local authorities*”.

For instance, it is mentioned that in 1981 the patronal feast of Slătioara Monastery was celebrated by a synaxis of twenty-eight priests and attended by approximately 1,500 Old Calendarist believers. The author of the report noted that the attendants had travelled to the monastery not only by personal car or public transport buses, which ran as usual, but also by coaches supplied by the Tourism Office of Galați County.

The reports held by the Archives of the State Secretariat for Religious Affairs also reveal that during the communist period, the “Old Calendarist Church” was thriving. In 1981, Slătioara monastery earned 150,000 lei/year from the state, only by selling livestock to the state. Additional earnings were obtained by selling candles (manufacturing facilities were attached to some Old Calendarist churches), and by the book trade. Most of the money ensured the maintenance of worship places or was even directed towards construction works. For instance, a new building was constructed at Slătioara in less than a year, as a residence for the monks (ground floor and first floor). When asked about the construction license, their “Bishop” Cozma Lostun, answered that such license could not be granted to them, as a tolerated religious group (cult), so they simply preferred to pay the fine of 26,000 lei and go on with the building works. During the communist era, building new places of worship or renovating the existing ones was allowed to continue unhindered. All reports invariable concluded with the remark that such actions have a negative impact on the legally-acknowledged denominations who

²³⁹ Similar remarks in the report entitled *Measures Taken by the Romanian Orthodox Church and the Department of Religious Affairs in 1972–1973 in Order to Restrain Old Calendarist Activity and to Have Them Rejoin the Romanian Orthodox Church*, which declares that the work of eparchial inspectors is “hindered by some of the representatives of state authority, who either fail to take any measures to curb Old Calendarist activity, or do too little against it and even cover and tolerate it” (Archives of the State Secretariat for Religious Affairs).

were not allowed any unlicensed construction works, and that this contrast “gives rise to criticism against our state and incites breaches of the law”²⁴⁰.

In 1989, Old Calendarism was quite visible within the religious landscape. The major Old Calendarist hubs continued to be those of Moldavia and Dobrogea. Thus, there were two deaneries in the area of Fălticeni: Rădășeni and Drăgușeni; and three sketes at Brădițel (forty nuns), Boboceni – Boroaia Village (fourteen nuns); Paiseni – Cornu Luncii Village (twenty nuns). At Rădășeni and Rîșca, the Old Calendarists had their own cemeteries, while in the other villages the deceased were buried in the cemeteries of Orthodox parishes. On the Feast of the Lord’s Nativity, Old Calendarist priests would visit and bless the believers’ houses on Christmas Eve²⁴¹.

Brăila and Galați counties had around eight hundred Old Calendarists living in nine villages, with over 90% of them dwelling in Furceni, Condrea and Liești. The devotees of Furceni and Liești were shepherded by Father Călugăr Pătrașcu Matei, assisted by Father Culache Ion, ordained in 1967 by Bishop Victor Leu²⁴². The community of Condrea had Father Machidan Mihail, ordained at Slătioara by Silvestru Onofrei²⁴³. In Constanța County, an Old Calendarist community of about twenty persons existed in the town of Medgidia and was headed by David Dumitru (ordained by Bishop Evloghie Oța); in Tulcea County, Old Calendarist communities had been established in the villages Izvoarele (twenty persons), Isaccea (six persons), Tulcea (four persons)²⁴⁴. In Buzău and Vrancea, an estimated number of 1,380 Old Calendarist devotees lived in the villages of Păunești,

²⁴⁰ Archives of the State Secretariat for Religious Affairs, report entitled “Grupuri anarhice. Stiliștii [Anarchist Groups. Old Calendarists]”, f. 2.

²⁴¹ Archives of the State Secretariat for Religious Affairs, report submitted by the Territorial Inspectorate for Suceava and Botoșani counties, no. 682/December 13 1989, f.2.

²⁴² Priest Victor Leu, son of Archpriest Grigorie Leu Botoșăneanu, fled Romania and under controversial circumstances was ordained a bishop at Vienna, for the Romanians living in exile. The validity of his ordination as bishop has raised and continues to raise many questions. According to the apologetic writings authored by his nephew, Victor Leu was allegedly kidnapped by the KGB, taken to Moscow, sentenced to death in Romania, then released in 1964. He died in 1978. See Paul Leu, *Episcopi români răpiți de KGB [Romanian Bishops Kidnapped by the KGB]*, “Episcopul Grigore Leu” Foundation, Bucharest, 2005; Cornel Leu, *Cartea Episcopilor Cruciați [The Book of Crusader Bishops]*, Bucharest, 2005.

²⁴³ Archives of the State Secretariat for Religious Affairs, the Territorial Inspectorate for Brăila and Galați counties, “Report on the current evolution of the Old Calendarist group in Galați and Brăila counties”, no. 215/December 11 1989.

²⁴⁴ Archives of the State Secretariat for Religious Affairs, Note nr. 79/11.12.1989 of the Territorial Inspectorate of Constanța and Tulcea counties.

Movilița, Mircești, Vânători, Ruginești, Câmpuri. A makeshift church had been improvised in Păunești, in the shed owned by a community member²⁴⁵.

In conclusion, it can be asserted that during the communist era, the “Old Calendar Church” continued to operate unhindered. It breached the law in several ways: while religious services were forbidden outside the churches, at Slătioara the patronal feasts were celebrated in the monastery’s courtyard and attended by thousands of people; religious proselytism was also carried out, while the local rapporteurs were well aware of this and even indicated the names of those persons who propagandized and caused unrest; worship places were constructed without license; in some cases, heads of the police stations, teachers, presidents of the agricultural cooperatives, central and local (county) authorities were Old Calendarists or came from Old Calendarist families; the priestly uniform was worn illegitimately; insults were launched against the Romanian Orthodox Church, etc.

An appropriate conclusion can be offered by the remarks of Deacon Prof. Dr. Petre I. David, regarding the situation of Old Calendarism under the communist regime: “It is worth noting that the communist authorities in Suceava enforced the “decree” (410/1959) only on the Orthodox monastics, while the Old Calendarist ones carried on and were even thriving at Râșca and Slătioara... Yes! In their hands were the stocks of meat, cheese, olives sent by the “brethren” of Jerusalem and Athos, Pskov and Kiev... all of them of great interest for the communist party’s organization at Suceava. So “persecuted” were the Old Calendarists, that between 1960–1980 all their hierarchs would spend their summers at Mount Athos, Jerusalem, Sinai or Moscow as a “penitential” act!”²⁴⁶

ADDENDUM: Dialogue between the Romanian Orthodox Church and Old Calendarist groups

Bucharest, October 19, 1950

Your Eminence,

I, the lesser among monastics Macarie Neacșu, a dweller of Sf. Gheorghe [St George] Skete on the territory of Copăceni Village, Ilfov County, and a member

²⁴⁵ Archives of the State Secretariat for Religious Affairs, Inspectorate of Buzău and Vrancea counties, Note 266/December 14 1989.

²⁴⁶ Deacon prof. dr. Petre I. David, *Timpul, ca o necesitate a înțelegerii misiunii creștine* [Time, as a prerequisite for understanding the Christian mission], BOR no. 7–12 (1994), p. 294, note 26.

of the Traditionalist Christian Cult, in my capacity as abbot of the above-mentioned skete, bring to Your Eminence's attention the following facts, in full humility and with great regret.

While visiting the faithful of the Traditionalist and the Right-Worshipping Cults, I found many divergences between their views. Due to this fact, some groups are not far from uniting with the Lipovans... such matters cause me great pain, that it may... (illegible writing) a flock which is faithful, but lacks hierarchs to shepherd it.

My soul and my conscience prompt me to beseech Your Eminence to lend a helping hand to these faithful people, so that they will not be led astray and become estranged from the "mother" church.

My own views, shared by many of the believers, are expressed in the following request:

That Your Eminence agree to let our faithful have one of the eminent metropolitans under the authority of Your Eminence – whichever they revere, to have this metropolitan ordain a bishop among their priests or monks; this person should be deemed by them worthy of this high rank for his quality and merits, which should be also verified by the Holy Synod.

By so doing, all the different branches of the Old Calendar believers will be unified into a single body and the bishop leading their spiritual destinies will be under the control and authority of the Holy Synod, continuing to hold their services, fasting times and feasts according to the old calendar, which they prefer. It is my hope that this will lead to closer spiritual harmony between our own ranks and the official church. At the same time, this would solve the predicament of the people mentioned above. I conclude my letter and await the response of Your Eminence,

I the lesser among monastics Macarie Neacșu.

The Holy Monastery Slatina
August 25, 1954

Your Eminence,

Following Your Eminence's order no. 6387/1954, on 20.VIII. 1954 [August 20, 1954] I travelled together with the reverend hieromonks Arsenie and Antonie of Slatina Monastery, to Slătioara Monastery in Fălțiceni *raion*, belonging to the

“Old Calendar Orthodox Group in the People’s Republic of Romania [Gruparea ortodoxă de stil vechi din Republica Populară Română]”.

We presented the reason for our visit and, satisfied that their memorandum from July 12 of the current year was given due consideration by Your Eminence, they agreed to have a discussion on the issues raised in that memorandum. On their behalf, the conversation was opened by Dionisie Huguianu, until 1949 a hierodeacon at Neamțu Monastery, who avowed being defrocked and then joining the Old Calendarists, and Glicherie Tănase, an Old Calendarist known since 1924, currently the abbot of Slătioara and the head of a major Old Calendarist group in the country.

Other dwellers of Slătioara Monastery joined them. The discussions lasted for almost 8 hours and were centered around the following questions and answers.

Question. “Why did you submit this memorandum? (The document registered by the Patriarchate’s Administration with no. 6387/July 28 1954). It appears you pursue the unity of the Orthodox Church and the Patriarch would be very glad to learn that you accept the authority of the canonical Orthodox Church. You did not state in your memorandum how you think this unity of the Orthodox Church can be achieved, and thus His Eminence the Patriarch has delegated us to ask about this.”

Answer. “We would like the official Church to consider returning to the old calendar, because it is the true one. The new calendar is Catholic. However, if for worldly reasons the official Church cannot take this step, then we say: If you don’t want to come to us, then just don’t, but – and this was the purpose of our memorandum – do not hinder us. Help us be acknowledged by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. After all, we are all Orthodox and we must support each other in opposing Catholicism. We had an audience with comrade Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej one day before crosses were removed from our churches’ steeples. The minister of Religious Affairs (Petre Constantinescu-Iași), was also present, and comrade Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej declared we should be acknowledged, in accordance with the Constitution and the Law of Religious Affairs. But when we went to the Ministry for a second time, it was like the devil had toppled it all... for the Ministry of Religious Affairs answered that since we are all Orthodox, our issue must be solved by the Patriarch of the official Orthodox Church.

This is why we turned to the Patriarch of the official Church, hoping he will declare he has nothing against us being acknowledged. You must remember that

we are keepers of the decisions of our forebearers and we will uphold them at all costs. We do not force anyone to join us, but we proclaim our right to live and to organize ourselves freely. We had enough persecution over 30 years from the State authorities and from the official Church. The official Church has always deemed us very dangerous, because we are traditional, and they were afraid of losing their faithful. From now on, we hope the official Church will be more tolerant. Tell the Patriarch and the Synod that we are happy that finally the official Church is reaching out to us. We have long waited for this moment. Please consider returning to the old calendar. We are happy to receive you in our fold.”

Our delegation noted Old Calendarists’ appeal for joint resistance against Catholicism, but pointed out that efficient action could only be taken under the direction of the canonical Holy Synod and therefore invited Old Calendarist monks to accept the new calendar regulations in obedience to the Holy Synod.

Answer. “We cannot do that! (all Old Calendarists vociferate). We side with the truth and cannot reject it. The Romanian Synod broke the decisions of Nicea regarding the Holy Easter, decisions that can in no way be breached, and by changing the calendar and celebrating Easter according to the old date, they have shortened the Holy Apostles’ fast, which means that the decisions of the Holy Fathers are being treated with contempt. We obey the Holy Fathers, not the astronomers, nor the hierarchs who breach the decisions of the Holy Councils. Only if an Ecumenical Council decrees the change of the calendar, and the entire pale of Orthodoxy adopts the new calendar, only then we will also accept it. But how can we? Russia still observes the old calendar, Jerusalem, Bulgaria, Serbia, the Holy Mount Athos as well. Romanians have taken up the new calendar. We are not outside the church. Most of the Church, the greatest part of it, keeps to the old calendar.”

Father Archimandrite Cleopa replied that the Council of Carthage (418), by Canon 55 (60) allows the Church the freedom to assemble and decide the Easter date every year, depending on the new realities created by the date variations due to the calculation of Jewish Pascha [Passover]. Father Cleopa read out this canon, which puzzled the Old Calendarists who avoided further discussions on this topic.

Old Calendarists asked about the return to the Easter date according to the old calendar. What is then to be done about the Holy Apostles’ fast, which in some years becomes too short, and other times is even abolished? This, they claim, breaches the Holy Fathers’ decisions, which is unacceptable.

Father Cleopa explained that the old Paschalion was accepted for the sake of the Church's peace and unity, which are more important than "scrutinizing dates and times," and the matter of this fasting period, as well as the matter of the calendar at large, is not a dogmatic matter but one of time calculations, which does not turn the proponents of the revised calendar into schismatics, as Old Calendarists call the Orthodox. Actually, all the other fasting times have been changed along the history, without the Church being seen as schismatic or heretical.

Answer. "It is not us who call you schismatics, but the Holy Fathers – Glicherie answers. And had you not returned to the old calendar date for Easter, you would have been heretics, as you were from 1924 to 1929."

About joining the canonical Orthodox Church, all Old Calendarists declare this is out of question. Not because they say so, but because the official Church should turn to the old calendar or at least should not prevent their recognition by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and by the other denominations.

Question. "And if you were acknowledged, who would be your hierarchy?"

Answer. "Our canonical bishop should be ordained by an Orthodox bishop from abroad. Let the gates of the East be open for us."

Question. "What if the Eastern patriarchs, who observe the old calendar in their countries, were to send letters to advise you to obey the Romanian Synod, what would you do?"

Answer. "We believe that the Eastern Patriarchs will not send such letters. And even if they did, they would do so not out of conviction, but because of their friendship to Patriarch Justinian. These are matters of "international relations," not faith. The Eastern Patriarchs instead of sending letters, should see to the calendar in their own countries. Why don't they, if they can? We do not rely on letters. The canons are all that matters."

Question. "If the Eastern patriarchs, who observe the old calendar, did send such letters, however, would they be schismatic?"

Answer. "Of course."

Question. "Well, know then that these letters have already been sent. At the Conference of Moscow in 1948, all patriarchs of the East and their delegates, signed a decision by which the clergy and the faithful in every country are to observe the calendar adopted by the Holy Synod of the respective country (They were shown the decision issued at Moscow in 1948, published in the volume "30 days in the USSR"). Even the Russian Orthodox Church in Bucharest, confirms

what we have said. This shows that the matter of the calendar is not a dogmatic matter, and observing the old or the new calendar is not tantamount to departing from Orthodoxy; but failure to obey the Holy Synod is to go astray from the Orthodox Church. If we truly were schismatics or heretics, then our patriarch and metropolitans and priests could not celebrate the Liturgy and receive the Eucharist together – in Jerusalem, in Constantinople, in Russia and Romania, as they did in 1934–1948, 1951 and on other occasions, when foreign hierarchs visited our country. This very year, His Eminence the Patriarch of Bulgaria is coming to Iași to take part in the celebration of Saint Paraskevi's feast. Well, these foreign hierarchs observe the old calendar in their own countries, but they receive the Holy Eucharist from the same chalice as us and share in the same holy communion. It would follow, according to canons 10, 11, 45, that if we are schismatics or heretics, then they should be also accused of schism or heresy, which does not happen, as you can all see. What do you think of this?"

Answer. "Canons forbid this. The Patriarch of Russia and the others were wrong. Such actions are also matters of "international relations," rather than faith. We keep our faith and stick to the old calendar, at all costs. Why don't the Patriarch of Russia and the others switch to the new calendar, in their own countries?"

Question. "Well, then, what kind of logic is this? In your view, the Patriarch of Russia is an example to follow because he keeps the old calendar, but the same patriarch is no longer a model to you when he allows a Russian church such as the one in Bucharest to follow the new calendar. In doing so, he is acting in the interest of the so-called "international relations," you say. Isn't it confusing and questionable?"

Answer. "It's common knowledge, who doesn't know that! They, the high and mighty ones, are all complicit, and to support each other they write letters and for the sake of this friendship they always humour each other and defy the Holy Fathers."

The Old Calendarists' conclusion was the following: "We shall stay as we are. You can either join us, or stop preventing our recognition."

Your Eminence,

These questions and answers, which sum up Old Calendarist's position and quote their exact words, as well as the entire conversation which was much more extensive, clearly demonstrate their attitude towards the Orthodox Church.

I find it pointless to make any further attempt at reaching an agreement or discussing with them, given their position. They reject even the most elementary logic, and every time we tried to reason with them in order to tackle this issue in a more open-minded way, offering examples in the history of the Church and the Orthodox Tradition, they proved to be absolutely obtuse and bull-headed. They will not listen to any arguments: they refuse to hear about astronomy, or the Synod, or anything else, but obstinately insist on observing the decisions of the Council of Nicea. They are willing to lay down their lives for this. They are fanatics.

At Slătioara Monastery, the calendar issue is mostly a matter of ignorance, but it may also be caused by another problem: this monastery, as well as other Old Calendarist ones, is home to some controversial persons, excluded from the Orthodox Church and deposed from the holy orders for various crimes. These people hide behind this façade of calendaristic piety, in order to preserve a personal favorable situation which they would otherwise lose completely. A discreet investigation might be appropriate in this case, to ascertain the true moral identity of every dweller. It is necessary to take canon law measures, on the one hand, and administrative measures on the other hand, because by abusive use of the monastic and priestly habit, and of their former status as celebrants which they have actually been stripped of, they carry out sustained propaganda against the canonical Orthodox Church, which they declare to be schismatic and compromised: they perform the second baptism and re-do the marriage services; with shallow reasoning and taking advantage of their prestige as priests, they mislead the pious faithful, mislead and deceive the people.

To conclude, I add that propriety prevents me from repeating their polemical words, their insults against the hierarchs and the Holy Synod, their language which only betrays their hatred towards the Orthodox Church and its shepherds – which they constantly avoid to term “the Orthodox Church” and instead refer to it only as the “official Church.”

Our delegation departed with one last call to return to the fold, as the only way to reconcile with themselves, with the Church, with their fellow people.

The humble servant of our Eminence,
Archimandrite Ilie Cleopa

Source: the National Archives, *Ministry of Religious Affairs. Directorate of Studies*.
File no. 1 bis/ 1954, f. 38–43

Department of Religious Affairs

Rapporteur Mircea Naicov

INFORMATIVE NOTE

August 7, 1957

Today, on August 7, 1957, at 9 a.m., an Old Calendarist delegation arrived at the Metropolitan see of Iași. The delegation included the following:

1. Moglan Nicolae of Mălini, Fălticeni *raion*
2. Moșneagu Gheorghe- Fântâna Mare
3. Sandu Petre- Rădășeni
4. Petre Cozma- Brădițel
5. Costache Corduneanu- Boroaia
6. Tănase Gheorghe-Slătioara
7. Alexandru Săftian- Boroaia
8. Gheorghe Savel-Hârtop
9. Săvoaia Emanuel- Hangu, Ceahlău *raion*
10. Urzică Ioan-Vânători, Târgu Neamț
11. Vasile Buzdea- Brusturi, Târgu Neamț
12. Bejan Constantin, Balș, Târgu Frumos

The Old Calendarist delegation included laypersons only, and none of the clergymen mentioned in the note submitted by citizen Moglan Nicolae to the Department.

Also, they were not accompanied by jurists, as they had announced in the note submitted by the Department.

Talks took place between 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., with His Eminence Dr. Justin Moisescu, Vicar Bishop Constantin Nonea, Reverend priest Scarlat Porcescu – eparchial counsellor, and the undersigned on behalf of the Department.

The delegates began the discussion on the matter of the calendar with His Eminence Justin, offering the arguments already familiar to the Department: the issue of fasting periods, the authority of the *Pedalion*'s texts, the dates of certain saints' feasts. As a special argument, Old Calendarists asserted that they keep to the old calendar not out of stubbornness, but out of faithfulness to the religious tradition observed by forefathers throughout the centuries.

Also, Old Calendarists argued that the USSR, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, etc. maintain the old calendar.

All their assertions were countered by His Eminence Dr. Justin Moisescu, who offered thorough explanations and debunked all their theories, and offered conciliatory advice urging them to comply with the discipline of the Romanian Orthodox Church to which they belong.

The discussions revealed that most of them make serious errors about religious canon law, and hold mistaken beliefs – such as the notion that there is a concordat between the Romanian Orthodox Church and the Vatican, or that the approvals issued by the former Ministry of Religious Affairs before the 1948 law are still valid and therefore provide legal authorization for their actions.

Also, Old Calendarists claimed that they are a legally constituted group and that opposing them is instigated by certain priests of the Orthodox Church, and thus they seemed to complain mostly against the respective priests, about the resistance they meet.

His Eminence Dr. Justin Moisescu explained the heresy they had fallen into, and the fact that they are members of the Orthodox Church who have gravely trespassed against Church discipline by propagating false views on certain religious practices related to saints' veneration and the celebration of feasts.

Metropolitan Justin revealed the true character of their leaders, mainly Cordun and Oța Evloghie; the delegates were shown Cordun's declarations of allegiance to the Church Synod, they were also explained that their movement does not function legally, and that they are exploited by persons who pursue material gain.

With the exception of citizen Săvoaia Emanuel, of Hangu-Ceahlău Village, who proved to be a staunch supporter of Old Calendarism, the rest of the delegates seemed to realize the wrongfulness of their group's actions and to be willing to abide by the discipline of the Orthodox Church.

In response to their proposals, Metropolitan Justin agreed to grant them a bishop and priests to serve their community.

They also requested clarifications on the existence of their future positions within the church, on the future situation of Old Calendarist sketes and churches, as well as of their staff.

The discussions clearly demonstrated that the delegation constituted a (*illegible*) which the leaders of Slătioara attempted with the Metropolitan See of the Romanian Orthodox Church, concerning a possible meeting they requested between Metropolitan Justin Moisescu and their self-proclaimed leader Glicherie.

At the end of the meeting, citizen Moșneagu Gh proposed H.E. Metropolitan Moisesescu to meet Glicherie at Slătioara. They were explained that such a meeting can only take place at the Metropolitan see in Iași.

To conclude, Old Calendarists declared that they would present to their leaders all their new findings about their situation, and that they would make efforts to clarify at least some of the issues to the members of their community.

They declared they would draw up a list of amendments to be submitted to the Department, containing the topics for the envisaged discussions between Metropolitan Justin and their leaders, with a view to rectifying the situation.

In my turn, I the undersigned spoke about the freedom of religious denominations in our country, the freedom granted to religions, and explained that based on the confession of the faith which they have previously submitted to the Department, they have not received approval to function as a separate denomination, but are considered to belong to the Romanian Orthodox Church.

I spoke to them about the constructive policy of our regime, and the unrest they are causing at this time in certain regions of our country, and advised them to abide by the legal religious establishment of the Church to which they rightfully belong.

Director,
Mircea Naicov

IV. THE DEVELOPMENT OF OLD CALENDARISM AFTER 1990

IV.1. Old Calendarist groups active in Romania today

Currently, several Old Calendarist groups operate in Romania. The best known ones are the following: “The Old Calendar Orthodox Church [Biserica Ortodoxă de Stil Vechi]” headquartered at Slătioara and headed by “Metropolitan” Vlasie Mogârzan; the group led by “Bishop” Gherontie and “Bishop” Casian; the faction headed by “Bishop” Cozma Lostun; and another traditionalist group, located at Copăceana-Vaslui.

Cozma Lostun, a “bishop” of the “Old Calendar Orthodox Church” headquartered at Slătioara (1978–1985), did not agree with the communion between the Metropolitan See of Slătioara and Metropolitan Kyprian of Oropos and Fili (whom he deemed to be a heretic and a modernist), communion declared in the year 1984. A fire broke out at Slătioara Monastery in 1984 and several buildings burned down, and Cozma Lostun was accused of setting fire deliberately. Between 1985–1989 “Bishop” Cozma was removed from all leading positions, and in 1992 he officially separated himself from Slătioara, and established a dissident Old Calendarist group.

In the year 2000, Cozma Lostun’s group attempted to enter into communion with the “True Orthodox Church of Greece” (Γνησία Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία τῆς Ἑλλάδος)²⁴⁷, shepherded by “Metropolitan” Kirykos of Mesogaia and Lavreotiki. Between November 22–27 2000, a delegation of Γνησία Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία τῆς Ἑλλάδος visited Romania in order to look into the situation of this Old Calendarist group, and examined the following documents: Cozma Lostun’s confession of the faith, a brief history of Old Calendarism in Romania, as well as the letter sent by Lostun to Kirykos requesting to be sent bishops, antimensia, myrrh and relics (said letter is dated from November 24, 2000). The “Synod” expressed reservations about the ordination of Galaction Cordun, but decided that Lostun was neither heretic – based on his confession of the faith – nor

²⁴⁷ <http://genuineorthodoxchurch.com/> www.churchgoc.org.

schismatic, since in 1992 he had separated himself from the “hierarchy” of Slătioara²⁴⁸. However, for unknown reasons, this attempted union failed.

According to the information available on the Internet, the group of Cozma Lostun immediately sought communion with another Old Calendarist group in Greece, entitled the “Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians of Greece” (Ἐκκλησία τῶν Γνησίων Ὁρθόδοξων Χριστιανῶν τῆς Ἑλλάδος). On May 25, 2001, Cozma was accepted as retired metropolitan of Moldavia and *locum tenens* of all Romania (at the time, he was paralyzed). He was appointed as exarch of Romania by the Greek Metropolitan Christoforos Angelopoulos of Mesogeia and the Islands. Cozma died the following year, and was buried next to the church of the Șaru Dornei Monastery (the headquarters, or seat of authority, of the “diocese”). The website of this Greek Old Calendarist group indicates, under the heading “Ἱεροὶ Ναοὶ καὶ Μονές ἐξωτερικοῦ” (holy churches and monasteries abroad), the following: St. George Monastery of Dâmbovița County, and *Izvorul Tămăduirii* [The Life-Giving Font] church in Bucharest, shepherded by “Father” Ἀνθίμος Μπεσίρ [Anthimos Besir]²⁴⁹.

Regarding the “True Orthodox Church of Greece” (Γνησία Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία τῆς Ἑλλάδος), we mention that the synod of this Old Calendarist group currently includes two Romanian “pseudo-bishops”: Casian, “Metropolitan of Iași, Moldavia and entire Romania” (Μητροπολίτης Ἰασίου, Μολδαβίας καὶ πάσης Ρουμανίας Κασσιανός) and Gherontie, “Bishop of Vrancea” (Ἐπίσκοπος Βράγκεας Γερόντιος). The website informs its readers that this Romanian Old Calendarist faction adhered to the “True Orthodox Church of Greece” on April 19, 2008²⁵⁰. The Greek-language website also reveals that these Romanian “hierarchs” deem themselves to be successors of Victor Leu, described as “the first bishop of Γνησία Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία abroad”. This Old Calendarist group has no communion whatsoever with Slătioara. Moreover, the Greek website states: “we condemn the schism spearheaded by Vlasie Mogârzan in Romania”²⁵¹.

²⁴⁸ The “Synod” meeting of December 15/28 2000, http://www.churchgoc.org/epkirykos/archion/prot_166.html.

²⁴⁹ http://www.omologitis.org/?page_id=766&lang=el.

²⁵⁰ http://genuineorthodoxchurch.com/GOC_Unity_in_Romania.htm

²⁵¹ <http://genuineorthodoxchurch.com/Pan-Orthodox%20Confession%20of%20Faith%20-%202008.htm> According to information available on the internet, this Old Calendarist group has the following places of worship: Înălțarea Domnului [Lord’s Ascension] Parish – Poduri Village, Bacău County; Sf. Ioan Botezătorul [St. John the Baptist] Monastery – Poduri Village, Bacău County (twenty nuns); Adormirea Maicii Domnului [Dormition of the Theotokos]

Archive documents include a number of memoranda sent by the Old Calendarists from around Furceni-Movilița Village, and submitted after 1990, petitioning for their recognition as a religious association. It is not known whether these are the Old Calendarist believers shepherded by “bishops” Casian and Gherontie, or another, separate group. The Ministry of Religious Affairs answered that the only acknowledged centre of the Old Calendarist movement is that of Slătioara, and advised the adherents to other Old Calendarist groups to affiliate themselves to this body²⁵². In 1991, in a memorandum submitted to the State Secretariat for Religious Affairs, sixteen members of the Slătioara Old Calendarist hub accused Pătrașcu Matei (Mina) of Furceni Noi Village, of “wearing priestly vestments and officiating religious services without holding any valid ordination” and Mușat Constantin of claiming for himself the title of “metropolitan bishop.” The Ministry of Religious Affairs was asked to intervene and forbid these two from continuing their activity. The report drawn up with reference to these events explained that “*it is a conflict between the two groups, each seeking to annihilate the other indirectly, through the intervention of state authorities.*”²⁵³

In 1994, a group of Old Calendarist believers of Furceni Noi, Galați County, demanded from the Patriarchate explanations on the Old Calendarist group of Slătioara, asking whether it was legally acknowledged cult and whether its hierarchy was canonical (in agreement with canon law): “*We require a clear answer, to let us know whether the group of Slătioara hold legal, canonical status, or are on their own and the people are misled and misinformed about them. Are they, or will they be acknowledged as a legal religious denomination in Romania,*

Monastery – Furceni Village, Galați County (fifteen nuns); Sf. Nicolae [St. Nicholas] Parish – Liești Village, Galați County; Sf. Împărați Constantin și Elena [Sts. (Holy Emperor) Constantine and Empress Helena] Parish – Gănești Village, Iași County; Nașterea Domnului [Lord’s Nativity] Parish – Ioscani Village, Iași County; Izvorul Tămăduirii [Life-Giving Font of the Mother of God] Parish – Movilița Village, Vrancea County; Sf. Arhangheli [Holy Archangels] parish – Angheliești Village, Vrancea County; Sf. Apostoli Petru și Pavel [Holy Apostles Peter and Paul] Monastery – Movilița Village, Vrancea County; Sf. Nicolae [St Nicholas] Skete – Ruginești Village, Vrancea County.

²⁵² Archives of the State Secretariat for Religious Affairs, *Memoriul unui grup de credincioși stiliști din comuna Liești [Memorandum of a group of Old Calendar believers of Liești Village]*, Galați County (no. 422a/ 573/27.05).

²⁵³ In the same year, it was reported that in Liești Village, the forty Old Calendarist families were divided into two groups: one under the authority of Slătioara, led by Father Condurache Nicolae. He began construction works to build a church in the center of the village, without any building license and without having any ownership rights for the land. The second group (of Mina Pătrașcu) includes the priests Father Culache Ion and Father Cerbu Gheorghe and holds religious services in a chapel built on private property land.

or are they simply carrying out illegal propaganda? This propaganda is also carried out among our relatives in Buzău county and elsewhere, and the people no longer know what to believe” (Address no. 5291/22.07.1994).

Finally, there is a group entitled “The Romanian Traditional Orthodox Church [Biserica Ortodoxă Tradițională Românească]” headed by Serafim Vasluianul, “Bishop of Vaslui, Vicar Bishop of the Archdiocese of Ukraine and of Republic of Moldova,” headquartered at St. George Monastery in Copăceana-Fălciu, Vaslui County²⁵⁴. Serafim was “ordained” in 2010, at Zaporozje (Ukraine), by “the Russian Holy Orthodox Synod,” headed by Damaskinos, “Metropolitan of Moscow and all Russia,” claiming that “he is in communion with the last canonical hierarchy still extant after the fall of the great ROCOR into heresy,” that its hierarchs are successors of Patriarch Tikhon, of the Holy Hierarchs Philaret and John Maximovitch, and that it is “the only Church keeping the direct canonical succession from the Holy Hierarch Tikhon.”

This Old Calendarist group is very active and very visible online, due to the efforts of Veniamin Ilie, secretary of the “Bishopric” and administrator of several websites popularizing it, who is very much engaged in apologetic activity on all forums addressing the matter of Old Calendarism (<http://veniaminilie.webs.com/>). He attended the Orthodox Theological Seminary “Sf. Apostol Andrei [The Holy Apostle Andrew]” in Galați (it is not known whether he graduated), then joined the Old Calendar Orthodox Church [Biserica Ortodoxa de Stil Vechi]. Later on, as he deemed that the Metropolis of Slătioara had fallen into heresy because of its communion with Metropolitan Kyprianos of Oropos, Greece, he left this group and joined the Orthodox Metropolis of Milan and Aquileia, where he was ordained as priest in the summer of 2008, by “Metropolitan” Evlogios [Evloghie]. Soon, however, he came into conflict with this “hierarchy,” too.

Finally, through the Bessarabian “Bishop” Adrian of Chișinău and of Moldavian Lands (actually, a mere priest of Racovăț Village, Soroca County), he contacted the “Russian Holy Orthodox Synod” headed by Damaskinos of Moscow, where he was ordained as priest again. Regarding the ordination received from Evlogios, Veniamin declared: “according to the decision passed by the leaders of the Russian

²⁵⁴ Several articles have been published by local and national newspapers on this Old Calendarist group, of which we mention: Alina Darie, *Nebuni în sutane false [Fools in Fake Cassocks]*, “Vremea nouă”, November 5, 2010; Marea schismă de la Copăceana [The Great Schism of Copaceana], “Adevărul” October 9 2010; Afurisitul de la Copăceana a ajuns episcop [The Defrocked of Copaceana has Become a Bishop], “Adevărul”, November 3, 2010.

Orthodox Church, the ordination performed by Metropolitan Evlogios cannot be considered to bear and convey the grace of the Holy Spirit, which is why “Father” Veniamin now receives the canonical ordination.” The official website of this “bishopric” informs us that this Old Calendarist group has further “ordained” four other priests: “Father” Mihail Petrescu in Bucharest, “Father” Augustin Vardianul in Bucharest, “Father” Teodosie Neghiniță in Constanța and “Father” Ciprian Dragomir in Brașov.²⁵⁵

IV.2. The “Old Calendar Orthodox Church [Biserica Ortodoxă de Stil Vechi]” (Slătioara Metropolis)

On February 16, 1990, the Old Calendarist believers of Slătioara decided to “re-establish the Old Calendar Church.” The minutes drawn up on this occasion noted that “with the consensus of all participants recorded in the table attached, we declare the re-establishment of the “Old Calendar Orthodox Church of Romania [Biserica Ortodoxă de Stil Vechi din Romania].” After sixty-six years of persecutions, we revive the Orthodox faith – the same as in Stephen the Great’s times, freed from the innovations that have affected its very core”²⁵⁶ (note the endorsement of the Moldavian “local patriotism” bias). Three days later, decision no. 1000/February 19 1990 of Suceava Court gave legal personality to the “Organization of Members of the Old Calendar Orthodox Church of Romania [Organizația Credincioșilor Bisericii Ortodoxe de Stil Vechi din Romania].” They immediately began procedures in order to obtain recognition from the State.

In 2003, the “Organization of Members of the Old Calendar Orthodox Church of Romania” changed its name to “The Old Calendar Orthodox Church of Romania [Biserica Ortodoxă de Stil Vechi din România]” by the Decision of Fălticeni Court, file no. 748/March 5, 2003. In 2007, the “Old Calendar Orthodox Church” submitted to the Ministry of Religious Affairs an impressive number of documents with a view to obtaining recognition as a religious denomination, and to acquire the status of Religious Association²⁵⁷. The memorandum attached to this request,

²⁵⁵ <http://serafimvasluiyear.wordpress.com/ps-serafim-vasluiyear/clerul-episcopiei/>

²⁵⁶ On the “Old Calendar Orthodox Church of Romania [Biserica Ortodoxă de Stil vechi din România]”, see: the State Secretariat for Religious Affairs, *Viața religioasă în România [Religious Life in Romania]*, Adrian Lemeni (ed.), Bucharest, 2005, pp. 91–93.

²⁵⁷ Association “Old Calendar Orthodox Church of Romania [Biserica Ortodoxă de Stil Vechi din România]”, *File ce conțin documentele în vederea transformării Asociației “Biserica Ortodoxă de Stil Vechi din România” în Asociația “Biserica Ortodoxă de Stil Vechi din România [Pages*

signed by 436 members, claimed to be endorsed by “500,000 devout believers, plus a great number of sympathizers.” The documents also presented the patrimony of this “Church,” consisting of 145 churches, monasteries and sketes (Appendix 23). The same memorandum stated that the Old Calendar Orthodox Church maintains “cordial relations” with the Romanian Orthodox Church, which however do not include liturgical communion, “due to divergences between the two calendars and to the participation of the Romanian Orthodox Church in inter-denominational ecumenical events, which is canonically forbidden to the Orthodox.”

Old Calendar Church’s organization is highly similar to that of the Romanian Orthodox Church, more precisely the stipulations of Șaguna’s Statutes. Thus, according to the Statutes presented in 2007, the “Old Calendar Orthodox Church” has the following governing bodies: the Holy Synod, the National Church Assembly, the Central Administration, the Central Church Council (Article 33). The Synod of the “Old Calendar Orthodox Church of Romania” includes the Metropolitan and all eparchial bishops and vicar bishops. It holds ordinary meetings twice a year, in the months of February and September, respectively, and extraordinary meetings whenever necessary. It has the following prerogatives: confirming the elected metropolitan and bishops; preserving the dogmatic and canonical unity of the Church; investigating any dogmatic matter; directing and monitoring the activity of the executive bodies in eparchies (Article 13). The National Church Assembly has the following prerogatives: it elects the Synod members; it elects the metropolitan and the bishops; it passes decisions on Church assets and properties; it directs, verifies, monitors and controls the administration and management of the association’s assets (Articles 9–11).²⁵⁸

containing the documents changing the title of Association “The Old Calendar Orthodox Church of Romania” into Association “The Old Calendar Orthodox Church of Romania”]; Minutes dated February 16, 1990.

²⁵⁸ The National Church Assembly is the central deliberative body for all economic-administrative issues which are not prerogatives of the Synod. It comprises the representatives of eparchies, delegated by Eparchial councils, priests and three members from each parochial council. Synod members are also members of the National Church Assembly. It has the following prerogatives: upholds the interests and rights of the Religious Association; supports and endorses its cultural, charitable, economic bodies; decides on the manner of supporting the Church and religious culture bodies; elects the members of the Central Church Council and the administrative counsellors; elects the bishops and the Metropolitan archbishop; examines the annual general report submitted by the Central Church Council; decides on the management of Church’s assets and goods, its foundations and its other institutions; votes the general budget of the Metropolis, verifies and approves its management accounting activities; directs, verifies, supervises and

The head of central administration and the highest executive authority is the metropolitan. He enjoys all the rights conferred by the Holy Canons and Church tradition; his distinctive attire includes two engolpia and a cross, and a koukoulion with black kamilavka. The metropolitan celebrates all religious services; ordains priests, deacons and bishops (together with the other bishops); consecrates the holy myrrh (together with other bishops), holy antimensia, and churches; convenes and chairs the central deliberative bodies; presides over the elections of bishops; represents the Association before courts of justice and state authorities; maintains communion relationships with other Orthodox Churches; sends out pastoral letters and brotherly advice; conducts irenic and spiritual visits; appoints the locum tenens for bishops for the vacant eparchies; approves bishops' leaves for their paid holidays²⁵⁹.

The current "hierarchy" of Slătioara (*as of the year 2010*) includes: Vlasie Mogârzan (titled archbishop and metropolitan), as well as ten "bishops": Demostene Nemțeanul (of Neamț), Ghenadie Băcăoanul (of Bacău), Sofronie Suceveanul (of Suceava), Teodosie Brașoveanul (of Brașov), Iosif Botășăneanul (of Botoșani), Antonie Ploieșteanul (of Ploiești), Flavian Ilfoveanul (of Ilfov), Glicherie Ieșeanul (of Iași), Dionisie Gălățeanul (of Galați), Evloghie Sibianul (of Sibiu) – the three latter ones "ordained" relatively recently, on November 4–5 2010.

The "Old Calendar Church" has repeatedly requested to become an officially recognized denomination and on many occasions has demanded financial support from the state. On January 22, respectively February 4 2004, a delegation headed by Vlasie Mogârzan asked the State Secretariat for Religious Affairs, to support the official recognition of the "Old Calendar Church" as a religious denomination;

controls the management and administration of the assets of its components; it supervises any component of the Association.

²⁵⁹ In exercising his prerogatives, he is assisted by: a vicar bishop; the Eparchial Council, elected by the Eparchial Assembly of each parish, and including three clergy members, three lay members, and two stand-in members – one clergyman and one layman; five administrative counsellors elected by the National Church Assembly. These are clergymen and are in charge of the cultural, philanthropic, administrative, organizational and financial departments; the Metropolitan Chancellery, with the following sectors and departments: a) secretariat, personnel, registry office, archive; b) theological training for Church staff; c) accounting department, cashier's office, administration; d) Legal department; e) Metropolitan's office; f) vicar's office; g) central consistory. At local level, the Association is organized into: a) eparchies; b) deaneries; c) parishes; d) monasteries (sketes). Within the Association operate the following commissions with distinct patrimony: the commission for dogmatic and canonical culture; the didactic and religious commission; the commission for Church culture; the commission for religious philanthropy; the commission for publications (art. 167–178).

to issue the necessary licenses; to provide financial aid for the construction of new worship places; to allocate farmland and forests to it; to facilitate the access of Old Calendar Orthodox pupils and students to theological schools and theological education of all levels. It stated that the Old Calendar Orthodox Church could not establish theological schools for the training of their clergy, and did not have access to the schools belonging to the Romanian Orthodox Church. For this reason, the young who intended to pursue a theological education were sent to Chișinău²⁶⁰.

It must be noted that prior to Romania's accession to the European Union, in 2003, certain communist deputies in the Republic of Moldova, delegated as members of the European Parliament, addressed the Council of Europe to denounce the so-called persecution of the "Old Calendar Orthodox Church" of Romania. Victor Stepaniuc, a communist member of the European Parliament, sent to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe a written report and several interpellations concerning the situation of the Old Calendar Orthodox Church in Romania. He spoke of the "discrimination" and "injustice" it had allegedly been subject to, and demanded that the Council of Europe offer clarifications on its recognition as an official denomination²⁶¹.

Recently, a number of Old Calendarist groups have been granted the status of religious associations, while they had been established with the intention of taking advantage of the opportunities and benefits offered by this situation. Among them are the "Orthodox Charitable Association Emmanuel and Gabriel [Asociația Ortodoxă de Binefacere Emanuel și Gabriel]" (Nehoiu town, Buzău County), founded by the defrocked priest Manea Constantin with the declared aim of "promoting the ancestral faith and the Orthodox spirituality" (Archives of the

²⁶⁰ Address sent by the "Old Calendar Orthodox Church" to the State Secretariat for Religious Affairs (Archives of the State Secretariat for Religious Affairs, no. 25/February 4 2004), to the Chamber of Deputies, the Commission for Human Rights, Religious Denominations and Matters of Minorities – March 2 1995). Also, the "Old Calendar Church" has made numerous requests for financial aid: see Address no. 5729/May 30 2001, or the memorandum of November 30, 2004 to the Prime Minister.

²⁶¹ See the article "Comuniștii moldoveni atacă din nou România la Consiliul Europei [The Communists of Moldova Attack Romania Again in the Council of Europe]", in "Evenimentul zilei" of January 22, 2004. During a TV program, "metropolitan" Vlasie Mogârzan disassociated himself from such acts: "I take this opportunity to declare that our Church has never asked and will never ask for the support of political organisms or persons outside our country" (The New Year Address delivered by Vlasie Mogârzan, "Universul credinței [The Universe of Faith]" broadcast by TVR 1 (January 4 2004).

State Secretariat for Religious Affairs, *Constitutive Act of the Association*)²⁶² or the Religious Association “Holy Trinity Monastery [Mănăstirea Sf. Treime] Cucova” (Galați), as well as others in the Metropolis of Moldavia and Bukovina.

The Ministry of Culture and Religious Affairs, through the State Secretariat for Religious Affairs, offers support and issues licenses for the construction of worship places. Sometimes, the requests submitted to various state institutions omit to mention that the envisaged buildings are commissioned by the “Old Calendar Orthodox Church”, which is not an acknowledged denomination and consequently cannot receive financial support. In 1997, the Initiative Committee for the construction of (Old Calendarist) Heroes’ Monastery [Mănăstirea Eroilor] in Săcuța Village- Boroia, Suceava County, sent a Memorandum to the Chamber of Deputies stamped with the seal “The Romanian Orthodox Church/ Heroes’ Monastery”, next to the signature of the mayor confirming the contents of the document, and to the seal of the town hall. The memorandum states that sums of money from the state budget were allocated through the Ministry of Religious Affairs, for the construction of new worship places, “but they wouldn’t let us have any”. In this context, we also mention the letter sent by the abbot of the Old Calendarist Monastery Prodromița, Palanca Village, Bacău County, to the Ministry of Public Finance, requesting material or financial support as sponsorship, however without mentioning that the monastery is an Old Calendarist one²⁶³.

The “Old Calendar Church” headquarters in Wallachia is the Dormition of the Theotokos [Adormirea Maicii Domnului] Monastery in Bucharest, located in Militari neighbourhood, 13–15 Televiziunii Street, and established in 1964. The monastery was closed down and demolished in 1983, but was re-established in 1993²⁶⁴. It is currently the residence of “Bishop” Flavian Bârgăoanu. Since 1999, the monastery has been issuing the journal “Catacombele Ortodoxiei [The Catacombs of Orthodoxy],” also available online. Also, the monastery holds many land parcels and assets obtained by donations, among them the parcel in Bucharest, 146 Cireșoiaia Street, with an area of 360 square meters, where the Holy Hierarch Niphon Metochion has already been built, as well as the apartment

²⁶² The protest of priests of Pâtârlagele deanery (Archives of the State Secretariat for Religious Affairs, Memorandum dated November 27, 2003) against the defrocked priest Manea Constantin who had founded the “Orthodox Charitable Association Emmanuel and Gabriel [Asociația Ortodoxă de Binefacere Emanuel și Gabriel]”.

²⁶³ Archives of the State Secretariat for Religious Affairs (memorandum no. 14385/21.06.2001).

²⁶⁴ Archives of the State Secretariat for Religious Affairs (Re-establishment request dated 14.04.1993); Agreement in principle of the State Secretariat for Religious Affairs no. 2682/13.05.1993.

no. 32 on the ground floor of apartment building Bl. N 13, sc 3, 1 Ghirlandei street, as accomodation for clergy²⁶⁵.

As far as international relations are concerned, the “Old Calendar Orthodox Church [Biserica Ortodoxă de Stil Vechi]” maintains liturgical communion with: the Old Calendar Church in Greece, represented by Metropolitan Kyprianos of Oropos and Fili (now deceased) with its eparchies of America, Europe and Australia; the Old Calendar Church in Diaspora, headquartered in New York, represented by Metropolitan Vitalie; the Old Calendar Church in Bulgaria, represented by Bishop Fotios of Traidita; the Old Calendar Church in Italy – Sardinia, represented by Metropolitan John, the Orthodox Church in the Republic of Moldova (represented by Metropolitan Vladimir of Chișinău). As noted in the volume published by the State Secretariat for Religious Affairs, “a special relationship is maintained with the Republic of Moldova’s Orthodox faithful and clergy, who are under the authority of the Patriarchate of Russia”²⁶⁶. In 1994, these were joined by the Orthodox Mission in southwestern France, based at the Holy Archangel Michael Monastery in Lavardac, represented by Archimandrite Antoine Contamin.

IV.3. The Old Calendar Orthodox Church and the Romanian Orthodox Church

The members of the “Old Calendar Orthodox Church [Biserica Ortodoxă de Stil Vechi]” regard the Orthodox faithful as schismatic. The official website of the Metropolis of Slătioara states: “We do not accept any kind of common prayer with these ecumenist heretics (Catholics, Monophysites, Lutherans, Calvinists, Protestants, Neo-Protestants, etc), sect members, heathen or new-calendar schismatics, who have disobeyed the decisions of the Holy Fathers, inspired by the Holy Spirit at the First Council of Nicea, and who were anathematized through the Encyclicals of the Eastern Patriarchs in 1582, 1756, 1848.”

Although it declares that “The Holy Synod of the Eastern Orthodox Church of Romania does not acknowledge any of the Mysteries (sacraments) of the Churches adhering to the calendar schism, except for the Baptism” and that “the baptized schismatics who return to the Right-Worshipping Eastern Church

²⁶⁵ Archives of the State Secretariat for Religious Affairs, Address no. 6961/412/September 2 1992, respectively address no. 4255/ 261/May 27 1992 – the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

²⁶⁶ The State Secretariat for Religious Affairs, *Viața religioasă în România [Religious Life in Romania]*, Adrian Lemeni (ed.), Bucharest, 2005, p. 92.

[Biserica cea Dreptslăvitoare de Răsărit]” are merely anointed with the Holy Great Chrism²⁶⁷, actually the Old Calendar Church does perform a second baptism²⁶⁸. The website of Slătioara Metropolis announces: “Based on the canons, we do recognize the baptism of schismatics (by triple immersion) but only provided this baptism has been performed in accordance with the prescriptions of the Orthodox Church (three complete immersions in the name of the Holy Trinity)... If those who are coming over to the right faith have not been baptized by the three immersions in the name of the Holy Trinity – be they schismatics or heretics – we deem them to be unbaptized and offer them the true baptism of the Orthodox Apostolic Church, then anoint them with the Holy Great Myrrh and administer the Holy Eucharist.”

As shown above, from the moment of their separation from the Romanian Orthodox Church, Old Calendarists have been led by defrocked priests **and monks who have been performing religious services according to the Old Calendar and have been “consecrating” Old Calendarist places of worship.** However, Canon 88 of Saint Basil the Great states that “once deposed, if they dare to celebrate the holy services after their defrocking, they will be severed from the Church and fall under anathema”²⁶⁹.

During all this time, Old Calendarists have claimed to have their own bishops in Jerusalem or other countries still observing the old calendar (or “old style”). However, it is known that a bishop is not allowed to interfere with canonical affairs of another eparchy, let alone another country. No action taken by a bishop is valid unless it is approved by a local bishop or unless it is delegated by hierarchs of the local Church. The *History of Slătioara Monastery* mentions a meeting between Glicherie Tănase and Patriarch Damianos of Jerusalem, an occasion when “Patriarch Damianos handed to Father Glicherie a number of holy antimensia and the holy and great myrrh, also granting to Father Glicherie his blessing in order to consecrate churches according to the old calendar” (p. 114). This statement, completely untrue, is disproved by other Old Calendarist sources. “Tradiția

²⁶⁷ *Biserica Ortodoxă de Răsărit din România. Istoricul Mănăstirii Slătioara [The Eastern Orthodox Church in Romania. History of Slătioara Monastery]*, p. 203.

²⁶⁸ Petition submitted by Mrs. V.M. whose daughter adhered to the Old Calendar movement, was re-baptized, then joined monastic life. The mother petitioned against the inhumane treatment of his daughter in the convent (daily confessions, exhausting work, poor hygiene, etc), which eventually resulted in her admission into a psychiatry hospital (Archives of the State Secretariat for Religious Affairs, document dated February 6, 2002).

²⁶⁹ Prof. Dr. Ioan Floca, *Canoanele Bisericii Ortodoxe. Note și comentarii*, Sibiu, 2005, p. 433.

Ortodoxă [Orthodox Tradition]” Review issued by the Metropolis of Slătioara asserts that “the only support offered by the Patriarch of Jerusalem to the resistance group led by Glicherie Tănase was his blessing for him to return to Romania to continue his fight and support the people,” which is also untrue, as shown above²⁷⁰.

Things became even more complicated from a canonical standpoint, when the retired Bishop Galaction Cordon joined the “Old Calendar Church.” It is known that he was received as a bishop, implicitly acknowledging the validity of the ordination performed by the Romanian Orthodox Church fifteen years earlier. Old Calendarists claim they had observed Canon 1 of Saint Basil the Great, according to which schismatic priests or hierarchs returning to Orthodoxy are to retain their rank, therefore they “accepted as valid the ordination as bishop of Galaction Cordon, who renounced the schism and returned to the right-worshipping faith.”²⁷¹ Obviously, this begs the question: which authority had accepted his consecration as a hierarch.

The official Old Calendarist publications I have examined show that this was acceptable only at the time, in 1955, by applying the principle of economy (oikonomia). When, however, the Church acquired a stronger and better established hierarchy, the principle of oikonomia gave way to the principle of akribeia. By virtue of this principle, the ordinations of schismatics are no longer accepted as valid. Thus Old Calendarists claim to be observing the canons of the Holy Fathers, who decided that what was done by virtue of the principle of economy at a particular time (that is, recognizing the ordination as bishop of Cordon), cannot become a law for the Church²⁷².

Moreover, after his self-appointment as head of the “Old Calendar Orthodox Church [Biserica Ortodoxa de Stil Vechi],” Galaction Cordon was immediately deposed by the Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church – an act which Old Calendarists obviously refuse to acknowledge²⁷³. This leads to a logical fallacy:

²⁷⁰ “Tradiția Ortodoxă [Orthodox Tradition]” no. 17, September 2007, pp. 7–8.

²⁷¹ *Biserica Ortodoxă de Răsărit din România. Istoricul Mănăstirii Slătioara [The Eastern Orthodox Church in Romania. History of Slătioara Monastery]*, p. 127.

²⁷² *Ibidem*, pp. 200–202. It is always compared to the situation in Africa. “The Old Calendar Orthodox Church in Romania has a similar situation. As this Church was undergoing a crisis, its only clergymen being Hieromonk Glicherie and Hierodeacon David, it could only move forward by applying the principle of churchly economy, according to which it accepted as valid the ordination of schismatics from the Orthodox Church observing the new calendar” („Tradiția Ortodoxă [Orthodox Tradition]” no. 17, September 2007, pp. 7–8).

²⁷³ *Biserica Ortodoxă de Răsărit din România. Istoricul Mănăstirii Slătioara*, pp. 133–134: “We reject this defrocking and deem it null and devoid of the work of the Holy Spirit, because it

on the one hand they accept as valid the ordination as bishop of Galaction Cordun in 1935 by the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church, but on the other hand they deny his defrocking, decreed by the same synod twenty years later. Finding themselves outside the Romanian Orthodox Church and lacking the guidance of a canonically legitimate clergy, the Old Calendarists have adopted erroneous attitudes, beliefs and religious practices and have thus strayed from the Orthodox path. For this reason, as shows Deacon Prof. Dr. Petre I. David, Old Calendarism has developed certain practices by which it resembles the Neo-Protestant movements²⁷⁴.

It is important to point out that the sacramental and canonical unity of the Orthodox Churches has not been altered after 1924. The Old Calendarists find themselves outside this canonical unity, despite their “special relationship” with the Orthodox Church of the Republic of Moldova headed by Metropolitan Vladimir of Chişinău. The Orthodox Churches observing the old calendar maintain canonical relationships not with the Old Calendarists in Romania, but with the Romanian Orthodox Church which observes the revised calendar. Jerusalem, the Church of Serbia, Mount Athos concelebrate the liturgy with the Churches observing the revised calendar, acknowledge the validity of their sacraments and remember these Churches in their diptychs. As show the available documents, the “Old Calendar Orthodox Church” has difficulties explaining to its own members why the heads of Orthodox Churches which observe the Julian calendar, visit Romania as guests of the Romanian Orthodox Church, but do not also visit Slătioara Monastery.

The first initiative for a dialogue with the “Old Calendar Church,” after the events of 1989, was taken by His Beatitude Patriarch Daniel, who during his pastoral-canonical visits of 1990–1991, as Metropolitan of Moldavia and Bukovina, sought dialogue with the leaders of the Old Calendarist group of Slătioara. During

was not performed in keeping with Church canons, but only as revenge taken by the schismatic Synod against the hierarch who, in compliance with Canon 15 of the Council of Constantinople (861) and with Apostolic Canon 31, separated himself from the schismatic faction for the sake of the faith.”

²⁷⁴ Deacon prof. dr. Petre I. David, *Timpul, ca o necesitate a înțelegerii misiunii creștine* [Time, as a prerequisite for understanding the Christian mission], BOR no. 7–12 (1994), pp. 289–309; Idem, *Călăuza creștină pentru cunoașterea și apărarea dreptei credințe în fața prozelitismului sectant* [A Christian guidebook to knowing and defending the Orthodox faith against sects' proselytism], Arad, 1987, pp. 170–175; Idem, *Anticalendariștii sau stiliștii fii rătăciți ai Bisericii strămoșești* [The opponents of the revised calendar, or Old Calendarists, estranged sons of our ancestral Church], “Îndrumătorul pastoral, misionar și patriotic”, Buzău, 1988; Idem, *Invasia Sectelor* [The Invasion of Sects], vol. II, Europolis, Constanța, 1999, pp. 11–38.

their meeting at Neamț Monastery, in December 1990, the Old Calendarist believers were offered the opportunity to attend seminaries and faculties of Orthodox Theology. Only one member of the Old Calendarist delegation, “Bishop” Silvestru Onofrei, admitted that when Galaction Cordun joined the “Old Calendar Church,” he was already carrying “the burden of insubordination and disobedience to the country’s patriarch and hierarchy.”²⁷⁵

In his turn, the worthy of remembrance Teoctist, Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church, declared to Patriarch Alexy of Moscow during the discussions on the reinstatement of the Metropolis of Bessarabia and Bukovina: “the Standing Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church deems it necessary to mention that certain differences, such as the adherence to the old/new calendar, do not constitute hindrances to achieving ecclesiastical administrative unity between Orthodox brethren on both sides of the Prut river” (the Holy Synod meeting of April 9, 1992).

A problem worth noting is that the so-called priests and hierarchs of the Old Calendar Church are hardly distinguishable from the priests and hierarchs of the Romanian Orthodox Church: they have similar vestments, their monasteries are no different, their religious services and chants are the same, their shop within the precincts of Bucharest North Railway Station sells Old Calendarist apologetics books, alongside Orthodox books issued by Sophia Publishing House or the Publishing House of the Bible and Mission Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church. In fact, their liturgical books copy the Orthodox ones, with the only difference being that their frontispiece page bears the name of “Metropolitan” Vlasie Mogârzan (raising the question of copyright ownership of printed matter for the Romanian Orthodox Church). Moreover, some believers of the “Old Calendar Church,” especially monks and nuns, beg in public spaces and means of transport, creating confusion over the institution they represent.

IV.4. Old Calendarism and the fundamentalist attitudes within the Romanian Orthodox Church

On September 24, 2010, Father Nichita Pașcan, the confessor priest of Brâncoveni Monastery (a convent), as well as twenty-nine of its sixty-five nuns and novices, left the convent and affiliated themselves to an Old Calendarist religious group of Greece. Shortly afterwards, the priest posted on the internet a

²⁷⁵ Archimandrite Timotei Aioanei, *Patriarhul Daniel și ținutul Fălticeniilor* [*Patriarch Daniel and Fălticeni region*], “Lumina” newspaper, Sunday, July 20, 2008.

so-called “Confession of the Faith”, signed by himself and the nuns and novices following him, explicitly declaring that “we have ceased any eucharistic and worship communion with the Romanian Patriarchate.” This document contains six accusations against the Romanian Orthodox Church, concerning: its pro-ecumenist attitude; its communion with “Sergianist apostates” (that is, today’s Patriarchate of Moscow); the revision of the calendar; its lifting the anathemas of 1054; its concelebration with Catholics; the fact that it acknowledges the Monophysite Churches²⁷⁶.

This “Confession of the Faith” also stated that Father Nichita and those who left the community of their convent were to come “under the omophorion [the authority] of the Synod of the True Orthodox Church of Greece (observing the old calendar), shepherded by His Eminence Makarios of Petra” – a small Old Calendarist group in Greece, which maintains no communion with any Orthodox Church²⁷⁷. The letter concludes by stressing that this group has nothing to do

²⁷⁶ Fragments of the “confession of the faith”: 1) “*The Romanian Orthodox Church (ROC) has been for many years and continues to be part of the heretical and anti-Christic organization WCC*”, which apostatizing documents; concelebration alongside heretics; professing, practicing and propagating the heresy of pan-ecumenism; 2) “*Full Eucharistic communion with Sergianist apostates (that is, today’s Patriarchate of Moscow) created by the schismatic Metropolitan Sergius Stragorodsky and the communist atheist state*”; 3) “*In 1924 in the Romanian Orthodox Church was introduced the new calendar, said to be “corrected” according to those of one mind with Pope Gregory XIII (and his successors) and with his Catholic atheist astronomers. Adopting this calendar was proposed, alongside other innovations, by the heretical Patriarchal Encyclical of the Patriarch of Constantinople in 1920, paving the satanical way for ecumenism*”; 4) “*In the year 1965 the Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras performed the so-called lifting (annulment) of the anathemas pronounced in 1054 by the Orthodox Church on the Roman Catholics, without the Roman Catholics renouncing their heresies. This wicked act was done by the Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras and his followers, on behalf of the entire Orthodox fold*”; 5) “*Concelebrations and common prayers of ROC and the official Orthodox Churches together with Catholics, as well as full acceptance of the Roman Catholic Church as a “Sister Church*”; 6) “*Another wrongful union was forged between the official Orthodox Churches and the “Oriental Monophysite Churches” in the year 1993 at Chambesy, by signing official documents acknowledging these “Churches” – joint documents which scorned and trampled upon the last four Holy Ecumenical Councils.*”

²⁷⁷ Currently, the Church of Greece has several major Old Calendarist groups. One of them is the “Church of the Genuine/ True Orthodox Christians of Greece” (Ἡ Ἐκκλησία τῶν Γνησίων Ὁρθόδοξων Χριστιανῶν Ἑλλάδος – Γ.Ο.Χ) also known as “Florinites” (φλωρινικοί) – the original branch which split from the Church of Greece in 1935, led by Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Florina (www.ecclesiagoc.gr). Another group is that of the “Matthewites” (ματθαϊκοί), named after Archbishop Matthew who split in 1937 from the group of the “Florinites” and established his own Old Calendar faction, entitled Γνησία Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία τῆς Ἑλλάδος (www.churchgoc.org, Florinites/Matthewites Schism – Truly Genuine Orthodox, wordpress.com). The “Makarians”, formerly known as “Lamians” broke off from the “Florinites” in 1995. In that year, 1995, Metropolitan Kallinikos of Lamia separated from the Synod of Chrysostomos (Florinites), because

with the Metropolitan see of Slătioara because, they say, the latter is in communion with the Kyprianites (a schismatic group which split from the Old Calendar Orthodox Church) and also because of its undecided attitude towards Sergianism, that is, towards the the “apostate Patriarchate of Moscow”. The Standing Eparchial Council of the Diocese of Slatina and Romanați decided to refer the case of Hieromonk Nichita Pașcan to the Eparchial Monastic Consistory ecclesiastical court, with a view to having him defrocked²⁷⁸.

Certainly, the “Brâncoveni case” is not historically related to Old Calendarism: Oltenia has not been an Old Calendarist hub in the past and is not one at present, either. As far as we know, only one Old Calendarist place of worship has been established after 1990 in the Metropolis of Oltenia: the Skete of the Finding of Saint John the Baptist’s Head” in Bumbști-Gorj. However, the regrettable incident at Brâncoveni Monastery is more likely related to the aggressive Old Calendarist propaganda, combining anti-ecumenist, anti-masonic phobia and deep-seated hatred against the Romanian Orthodox Church. “The Old Calendar Orthodox Church” and the Old Calendarist movement at large, predicate their discourse today on the denunciation of ecumenism, Catholicism, the freemasonry, and communism, and obstinately claim – as all sectarian movements do – that they are the only true church, rejecting all logical, theological or biblical arguments.

The same ideas are propagated by some marginal fundamentalist groups within the Romanian Orthodox Church, which covertly subvert it and promote a pietist, obscurantist spirit and a “catacomb theology”. We mention the declarations of “theologian” Danion Vasile, who conducts Old Calendarist propaganda through conferences and articles posted on his weblog. Danion Vasile delivered several conferences in Chișinău – the Republic of Moldova, where he denigrated the Romanian Orthodox Church. On the feast of the Annunciation in 2010, during a conference held by ASTRADROM at Oradea, and entitled “Signs of the Latter Days”, Danion Vasile spoke about the adoption of the revised calendar as one

of what they saw as “breaks of canonical discipline”. Between 1995 and 1997 this movement split into three groups. The first one reconciled with Archbishop Chrystostomos of the Greek Orthodox Church (Kiounis’s group). The second one, led by Paisios Loulourgas, Metropolitan of America, passed under the authority of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. At the same time, Kallinokos of Lamia and Euthymios of Thessaloniki ordained five titular bishops, attempting to create a synod. In 2003, these decided to elect Makarios Kavakides as their primate.

²⁷⁸ *Communiqué on priest Nichita Pașcan of Brâncoveni Monastery leaving the Orthodox Church* (The Press Office of the Diocese of Slatina and Romanați), <http://www.episcopiaslatinei.ro/2010/10/05/comunicat-privind-parasirea-bisericii-ortodoxe-de-catre-preotul-nichita-pascan-de-la-manastirea-brancoveni/>

of these signs. He also stated that the Romanian Orthodox Church is devoid of grace, that Father Cleopa “deceived the faithful in the matter of the calendar”, that only the Saints of Optina still possess the true faith, etc²⁷⁹. Also, the Romanian Orthodox Church was denounced as a “member of an anti-Orthodox body” by Danion Vasile in an article published in AXA review (no. 38/2010)²⁸⁰, while on his weblog he stated that the Romanian Orthodox Church ought to leave the World Council of Churches (WCC) “before those who love the truth leave the fold of the Romanian Orthodox Church”²⁸¹.

In our opinion, the Romanian Orthodox Church should take a stance against such Orthodox fundamentalist assertions, which can easily generate phenomena similar to the Old Calendarist movement. The truth cannot be imposed by force, but it has to be confessed in the spirit of love. The Romanian Orthodox Church is a partner for dialogue, not an “appendage” of WCC, while the WCC is not a superimposed church, but a platform for dialogue. The documents signed do not alter the Orthodox dogmas, but merely pursue practical solutions for living together, and common attitudes in facing today’s challenges. Engaging in dialogue with other denominations, so that “all may be one” is not tantamount to betraying one’s own religion or faith. Ecumenism is a missionary opportunity, offering the chance to confess the truth of the faith, as long as one really lives it out. The letter of Hieromonk Nichita mentions the primary duty of Orthodox believers towards all fellow people: confessing Christ. We can hardly do this unless we communicate with the others, unless we know each other, if we merely expect others to reach out to us.

As far as freemasonry is concerned, it is widely known that the Romanian Orthodox Church condemned this secret organization in 1937, based on the study written by His Eminence Metropolitan Nicolae of Ardeal, and on the vote of the Holy Synod in the meeting of March 11, 1937 (BOR, no. 1–2, 1937), following discussions and debates which held the Holy Synod’s agenda for several years. Regrettably, this document is insufficiently known among the faithful and the general public.

²⁷⁹ Fragments of the audio recordings of this conference are available at: <http://vimeo.com/10538162>

²⁸⁰ <http://www.danionvasile.ro/blog/2010/06/02/biserica-ortodoxa-romana-madular-al-unui-trup-anti-ortodox%E2%80%A6/>

²⁸¹ Statement posted on his weblog on June 2, 2010. <http://www.danionvasile.ro/blog/2010/06/02/cum-ne-manipuleaza-consiliul-mondial-al-bisericii/>. Such know-it-all “Orthodox gurus” full of pride or rather foolishness, claiming to be apologetes of the truth and the only ones in possession of it, are to be avoided at the conferences run by A.S.C.O.R. [the Association of the Orthodox Christian Students in Romania].

The Old Calendarist apologetic texts denounce the so-called collaboration of the Orthodox Church with the communist regime. Patriarch Nicodim had actually protested against the presence of Soviet troops in Romania, refused to sign a number of decrees which affected Church's autonomy, and took a firm stance during the visit of Patriarch Aleksy I of Moscow to Romania²⁸². The alleged collaborationism of Patriarch Justinian is today disproved by the archive documents which demonstrate that Patriarch Justinian opposed the measures taken by the leaders of the communist party and of the state against the Church²⁸³. The documents and records of CNSAS – the National Council for the Study of the State Security [Securitate] Archives, which are now being thoroughly investigated by researchers, reveal the true fight for survival and faith confession undertaken by the Romanian Orthodox Church during that era.

ADDENDUM: The Confession of the Faith of the Old Calendar Orthodox Church [Biserica Ortodoxă de Stil Vechi] (excerpts) versus the Orthodox position²⁸⁴

Article 10: We believe in the canons of the Holy Apostles, of the seven Ecumenical Councils and the Holy Fathers of the local Synods, which are inspired by the Holy Spirit and cannot be in any way altered (Article 16 of the Statutes).

²⁸² Petroniu, Archimandrite, *Întâmplări din vremea patriarhului Nicodim [Events During the Tenure of Patriarch Nicodim]*, "Teologie și Viață [Theology and Life]" no. 7–12 (1999), pp. 167–169.

²⁸³ Nicoleta Ionescu-Gură, *Stalinizarea României. Republica Populară română 1948–1950: transformări instituționale [Romania's Stalinization. The People's Republic of Romania 1948–1950: Institutional Changes]*, Bic All Publishing House 2005, p. 433.

²⁸⁴ This "Confession" is available in: *Biserica Ortodoxă de Răsărit din România. Istoricul Mănăstirii Slătioara [The Eastern Orthodox Church in Romania. History of Slătioara Monastery]*, pp. 209–212, as well as: Association "The Old Calendar Church of Romania [Biserica Ortodoxă de Stil Vechi din România]", *File ce conțin documentele în vederea transformării Asociației "Biserica Ortodoxă de Stil Vechi din România" în Asociația "Biserica Ortodoxă de Stil Vechi din România [Pages containing the documents changing the title of Association "The Old Calendar Orthodox Church of Romania" into Association "The Old Calendar Orthodox Church of Romania"]"* (articles 7–30 in the Statutes for the organization and functioning of the Old Calendar Church of Romania [Biserica de Stil Vechi din România]). The answers defining the Orthodox position are based on the remarks of Archimandrite Ilie Cleopa included in the brochure entitled *Cuvânt de lămurire în legătură cu rătăcirile stiliștilor [Explanations on the errors of Old Calendarists]* („Biserica Ortodoxă Română [Romanian Orthodox Church]”, no. 3–4/1955, pp. 251–294), which also includes a *Orientare asupra abaterilor canonice ale stiliștilor și canoanele ce-i condamnă [Clarifications on Old Calendarists' deviations from the canons, and on the canons condemning them]*. According to archive documents, the brochure of Father Cleopa was sent to all eparchies with Old Calendarist population: Iași (1,600 copies), Roman (600 copies), Galați (500 copies), Buzău (400 copies), together with the Pastoral Letter addressed by Patriarch Justinian to Old Calendarist believers.

Orthodox answer: The canons are not equal in importance to dogmas²⁸⁵. The canons concern and regulate the earthly aspects of Church life and are issued in accordance with its life in the world. The canons evolve with the changes in perspective and understanding, and with the progress of the earthly life of the Church. Certain canons were modified from one Ecumenical Council to the next, for instance Apostolic Canon 5 was replaced with Canon 12 of the Sixth Ecumenical Council. Also, Canon 10 of the Synod of Ancyra is in disagreement with Canon 6 of the Sixth Ecumenical Council, and so on. **It is the Church that applies and interprets the canons.**

Article 15: We observe the Paschalion established by the Holy Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council of Nicea and by the Fathers of the Council of Antioch (345 A.D.) which set the celebration of the Holy Easter in the universal Orthodox, right-worshipping Church to the end of times, never before March 22 and never later than April 25, according to the Julian calendar (Article 21 of the Statutes).

Orthodox answer: The Fathers of Nicea enshrined the rules in the Alexandrian Paschal Canon, deciding that Easter shall be always celebrated, throughout Christendom, on the first Sunday following after the full moon and the spring equinox. To avoid celebrating it on the same day as the Jewish Pascha [Passover], when the 14th day of Nissan falls on a Sunday, the Easter is delayed until the following week. Since the Council's documents have not been preserved, this decree setting the Easter date calculations is known to us thanks to the Epistle to the Church of Alexandria (Socrates, Church History/Historia Ecclesiastica I, 9) – giving to the Christians of Egypt, Libya and Pentapolis “the good news” of consensus achieved on the celebration of Easter – and to Emperor Constantine's Circular Letter to the bishops (Eusebius, Life of Constantine III, 7).

The Fathers of the Council of Nicea also agreed that, in order to prevent future dissensions among Christians, as a result of errors in the calculation of the equinox, the date for Easter should be calculated each year and announced to all Churches by the Archbishop (Pope) of Alexandria – the cultural centre of the Antiquity, where astronomy had been making strides. The archbishop drew up annually the so-called “Festal Epistles” announcing the dates for Easter and Lent. This is confirmed by Canon 51 of the Council of Carthage, 418 A.D., which

²⁸⁵ *** *Adevărata ortodoxie și calendarul [True Orthodoxy and the Calendar]*, Fălticeni, 1934, p.26.

reads: “Every year we shall convene to take counsel together and when we are all gathered, then we shall announce the date of the Holy Easter”²⁸⁶.

However, controversies over the Easter date did not cease, because of Rome’s unwillingness to adhere to the Alexandrian manner of calculating the Paschalion. The Church of Alexandria had set a lunar cycle of nineteen years and a Paschal cycle of ninety-five years, taking March 21 as the date of the spring equinox and considering that the full moon lunar phase fell on the fourteenth day after the new moon. The Western Church used a different algorithm, with a eighty-four-year Paschal cycle and the equinox on March 18. Until the eighth century, Holy Easter was not celebrated uniformly across the Christian world, although at the time the West and the East were one, undivided Church. For instance, in 417 A.D., Alexandria celebrated Holy Easter on April 22, while Rome celebrated it on March 25. And no canon was issued to declare the Western churches schismatic or heretical, because they celebrated Easter at a different date²⁸⁷. On the contrary, it is known that in 333 A.D., Alexandria replaced the date of April 22, which resulted according to its own Paschal calculations, with the date of April 15, in order to avoid the coincidence of the Great and Holy Saturday, a day of mourning for the Lord’s Passion, and the celebrations commemorating the founding of Rome (April 21), a day of rejoicing²⁸⁸.

The Council of Nicea did not issue a permanently valid Paschalion, as Old Calendarists claim. There is no such Paschalion to be found in the canons formulated by this Council or in the Council’s documents. There is no perfect, perpetually valid calendar, just as there is no definitive, perpetually valid Paschalion. A calendar maintains its course and its balance by means of subsequent adjustments, and the Paschalion is subject to the same need for correction, in keeping with the adjusted calendar and the scientific, astronomical realities. **The Lord’s Resurrection is a cosmic celebration, beyond time and space; the Easter date, however, can**

²⁸⁶ Dr. Nicodim Milaș, *Canoanele Bisericii Ortodoxe, însoțite de comentarii* [*The Canons of the Orthodox Church, with Commentaries*], vol. II, Part I, Arad, Tipografie Diecezană [Diocesan Publishing House], 1934, p. 212.

²⁸⁷ Prof. dr. Theodor M. Popescu, *Problema stabilizării datei pascale. Privire istorică asupra divergențelor și calculurilor pascale. Încercări de îndreptare. Greutatea și necesitatea unui acord. Propuneri și posibilități actuale* [*The issue of a stable Easter date. A historical overview on the divergences over Paschal computus. Attempts at correction. The difficulty and necessity of reaching consensus. Current proposals and possibilities*], “Ortodoxia [Orthodoxy]” no. 3 (1964), p. 342. Professor Theodor M. Popescu shows that between 325 and 784 A.D. there were forty instances of different Paschal calculations by which Rome and Alexandria diverged (p. 353).

²⁸⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 345.

be set on a convenient day, deemed adequate by the Orthodox Church depending on its needs. For Christians living above the Arctic Circle and who thus experience polar nights, or the Christians in Australia or the New Zealand, whose time zone greatly differs from the European ones, the calculation of the vernal equinox and of the date of Easter is even more challenging.

In conclusion, it is a mistake to subordinate the calendar to the Paschalion and to believe that the calendar should not be corrected or adjusted, because the Paschalion should not be altered. This manner of thinking reverses the normal, scientific relationship between Paschalion and calendar. The calendar is not based and dependent on the Paschalion, but the Paschalion is dependent on the calendar. The Paschalion can be calculated and applied only with the help of the calendar, within its framework²⁸⁹.

Article 16: We reject the calendar reform and we regard it as an innovation alien to the Orthodox thinking, and observe the feasts according to the Julian calendar (Article 22 of the Statutes)

Orthodox answer: The revised, or corrected, calendar is not the Gregorian calendar. Out of ignorance or ill intention, the Old Calendarists accuse the Orthodox Church that it simply borrowed the Gregorian calendar when it undertook the calendar revision. Hence their conclusion that we have abjured our religion and “sided with the Catholics”. The Orthodox synodal decisions, since the sixteenth century to the present day, condemn the Gregorian calendar which did not consider the decision of the First Ecumenical Council regarding Easter and set a wrong Paschalion. The revised Julian calendar has left the Paschalion untouched.

Article 17: We observe the official calendar with regard to days, months and years, as time measurement tools. However, with regard to the Feasts established by the Holy Fathers for each of the 365 time units of the calendar, to commemorate the miracles that took place at each of these dates, we deem these feasts to be divine decisions and we cannot change them or celebrate them earlier or later than their set dates, because they are also celebrated in Heaven at these dates (Article 23 of the Statutes).

Orthodox answer: The Holy Fathers did not write in their articles of the faith: “I believe in one calendar”. Nor has the Holy Tradition passed down such a notion. If we examine the Confession of the Faith of the Eastern Orthodox

²⁸⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 428.

Church, we will find no mention of the calendar, Paschalion, or belief therein. As we have shown, the calendar is a means for time measurement, it has been devised by the human mind and not revealed or descended from Heaven. It is devised by scientists, and the Church employs it for its needs. Lord Jesus Christ used the Jewish calendar, while the apostles used the calendars of the regions where they were preaching.

For this reason, it is wrong to use the phrase “holy calendar”, as the Old Calendarists do. Admittedly, there are consecrated items in the Church: we thus say “holy icons, holy vestments”, also we use the terms “holidays/ holy days, the Holy and Great Lent”. The Church, however, also has objects used for cleaning, or for the religious services, which no one calls “holy”, because they are merely items for everyday use. No one will say “holy heating system”, “holy microphone” or “holy vacuum cleaner”, etc.

If the early Christians and later, the Fathers of the Holy Council of Nicea had known that the calendar can be a cause of conflict, they would never have accepted a calendar devised by a pagan philosopher, for the use of the Church. But by accepting it and by setting fast times and feasts according to it, they did not become pagans.

Regarding the “celebration of feasts in Heavens”, those in the Paradise experience perpetual celebration; they do not have fasting, dry fasting, or days when eating fish is allowed, and so on. This notion demonstrates how worldly the Old Calendarist religious thinking is. God’s Kingdom has no calendar, no sacred languages, or other such things.

Article 18: We believe in the miracle occurring on the day of Lord’s Resurrection, when every year, according to the old Paschal date of the Julian calendar, the Holy Light appears within the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, which proves that the Resurrection is celebrated at this date in Heavens, too. Thus the Holy Fathers have set all feasts in a perfect way, not only the Paschal feast (Article 24 of the Statutes).

Orthodox answer: The Holy Light (or Holy Fire) does not depend on the revised or unrevised calendar, but it descends only when the Orthodox Christians celebrate the service of the Resurrection together. It is not the Holy Easter that depends on the Holy Light, but the Holy Light is caused to appear by the religious service held for the Lord’s Resurrection, that is, it descends when the Christians of Christ’s Orthodox Church celebrate the Paschal service at the Lord’s sepulchre,

irrespective of the date. We believe that the Holy Light did descend when the Holy Easter service was performed in Jerusalem on other days than Sundays, as it used to be officiated before the First Ecumenical Council of Nicea. Clearly, the Holy Light depends on the celebration of the Holy Easter, and not the other way around; the Holy Light is a great miracle, which is further confirmation of the Lord's Resurrection and convinces the doubtful. "We have seen the true light, we have received the heavenly Spirit, we have found the true faith..." we declare at the end of the Holy Liturgy; this Light of God's presence transfigures us if we truly participate in the mystery of the Resurrection wholeheartedly. Millions of people have acquired salvation, have died as martyrs and have become saints, without ever visiting Jerusalem to see the Holy Light, some of them without even knowing about this miracle that occurs in Jerusalem on the Lord's Resurrection.

Article 19: We believe that in keeping with the old rules established by the Holy Fathers, the Holy Apostles' fast cannot last less than eight days, nor more than forty-two days (Article 25 of the Statutes).

Orthodox answer: Admittedly, by adopting the revised Julian calendar and maintaining the Easter date of the non-revised calendar, the Holy Apostles' fast was shortened by thirteen days, and sometimes, when Easter date falls later in the year, it is abolished altogether. In these situations, the Church has instituted a three-day fast before the Holy Apostles' Feast. This is a result of the incomplete implementation of the decisions of the Conference of Constantinople (1923).

The Apostolic Constitutions (V, 20) and some of the Church Fathers confirm that this fast is a very old one. For a long time, its duration varied. For centuries, it was very long, lasting from the Feast of All Saints to August 14, as shown by Saint Athanasius of Sinai in the seventh century. He states that this fasting period "was shortened by the Holy Fathers for the sake of economy (oikonomia)", so that the month of July was removed from it. Canons mention this fast in the ninth century (Canon XX of Saint Nikephoros the Confessor). The Church has the same ministry, power and grace at all times, throughout the centuries, and must set rules able to produce positive results for the spiritual progress of its members. A local Church may establish special fasting periods, in the case of natural disasters, just as it can suspend the fasting, if necessary. This is what the Romanian Orthodox Church did in 1907 by the Encyclical on Fasting („Monitorul Oficial [Official Gazette]" no. 49/June 2, 1907) which exempted from fasting

“those who are ill or weak, children and women recovering from birth, those who are sick or infirm, etc.”

Article 20: We believe that with the setting of feasts by the Holy Fathers, the Church calendar has been established once and for all, and that this establishment is the work of the Holy Spirit, who never contradicts Himself, and being perfect has no need for any devices created by human mind, because human mind is limited and unable to contain the limitless God. (Article 26 of the Statutes)

Orthodox answer: Despite the assertion that “the human mind is limited and unable to contain the limitless God”, all the above-quoted articles evince a very worldly understanding of the Kingdom of God. God and His saints know a continuous, perpetual present. One cannot talk of a “calendar in Heavens.”

The Church calendar is a framework, a chronological scheme or setting for the feasts dedicated to saints or to major religious events, in order to celebrate them and with a view to our salvation. To a devout Christian, it is important to celebrate saints or events, and the stress is laid on the celebration itself, rather than the moment of these feasts. The revision and correction of the calendar, its implementation and observance, do not impinge on the salvation of believers. The dogmas are immutable, unchangeable truths of the faith. The canons aim to ensure uniform organization and the ecclesiastical discipline. Church authority bodies can issue ecclesiastical laws and regulations, can pass the necessary decisions for certain situations provided that they do not alter the spirit of the old norms, however attuning them to the social, political, economic and cultural realities, when the Church deems such decisions to be needed. Those members who dismiss the decisions of the Church and depart from its mystical body, like branches detached from a tree, become schismatics and spiritually dead²⁹⁰.

²⁹⁰ Teoctist, Metropolitan of Moldavia and Suceava (ed.), *Îndreptarea calendarului, hotărâre întemeiată a Bisericii Ortodoxe*, [The calendar revision, a well-reasoned decision of the Orthodox Church], “Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei” journal („MMS”), no. 7–9 (1982), p. 600.

CONCLUSION

As stated in the Foreword, addressing this topic poses a challenge, mainly concerning the approach. Indeed, the history of Old Calendarism is still “work in progress”, with many aspects yet unexplored. A number of elements are insufficiently known and investigated, the most important one being the relationship between Old Calendarism and underground communism during the interwar period, respectively between Old Calendarism and the communist regime after 1944. The entire history of Old Calendarism, with the persecutions it was subject to during the interwar period and the tolerance it enjoyed during the communist times, respectively, can only be understood by regarding it through the lens of a “special rapport” with Moscow.

Certain key figures in the history of Old Calendarism suddenly appear in documents, only to disappear just as unexpectedly, with no further information available on their subsequent activity. Such is the case of Ion Movileanu, so frequently mentioned in archive documents from 1945 onwards, but never mentioned by the *History* published by Slătioara Monastery²⁹¹, or the case of Mircea Ispir, the lieutenant of Galaction Cordon. Old Calendarist sources provide contradictory portrayals of Ispir. Thus, the *History of Slătioara Monastery* describes him as “the faithful minion of the Securitate [Department of State Security – the secret police agency]”, the “Trojan horse subverting the resistance movement of Slătioara”. On page 141, it is stated that “his mission was to convince the leaders of this cult to accept the Gregorian calendar, and also to report to the State Security all events taking place within Slătioara Monastery”. Five pages on, Ispir turns into a positive character, helping Glicherie to “escape” from Răchitoasa and sheltering him in his own apartment (pp. 146–147). Hopefully, further research into the CNSAS Archives will reveal new information in this matter.

²⁹¹ Ion Movileanu is mentioned for the last time in a document dated 1980: “The faction in the south of Moldavia is almost dissolved, Ion Movileanu aged over 70 is now isolated, having a very small number of followers in the villages of Movilița and Mircești-Vrancea County, and Furcenii Noi, Galați County” (Archives of the State Secretariat for Religious Affairs, report entitled “Activitatea grupării anarhice a stilismului în cadrul cultului ortodox [The Activity of the Anarchist Old Calendarist Group within the Orthodox Fold]”, f. 9).

The challenge lies not only in the difficulties of investigation, but also in its reception. I am convinced that the present book will ruffle feathers and upset certain sensibilities, and will generate reactions and debates, both in Orthodox theological milieus, and in the Old Calendarist circles. On the one hand, the Romanian theological sphere evinces an inexplicable tendency to shroud this topic in mystery, since they seem to shy away from tackling it or they avoid it completely. Old Calendarism is part of the history of the Church – a history that should be faced squarely – and it is also a missionary-pastoral matter which should be dealt with very seriously and responsibly.

On the other hand, as far as Old Calendarist groups are concerned, they evince a triumphalist attitude and sectarian-exclusivist spirit, and tend to offer a romanticized view on certain events or persons, in order to appear as victims or to denigrate the Orthodox Church. Hopefully, the archive information made accessible by the present study will correct certain misperceptions, will raise questions, and will prompt sincere, constructive inquiries to find the truth.

Our intention was not to produce a polemic work, but an investigative one, to serve missionary purposes. The “Old Calendar Orthodox Church [Biserica Ortodoxă de Stil Vechi]” and the other Old Calendarist groups mentioned are centrifugal trends arising within the Romanian Orthodox Church, which must be known, and the present book has endeavoured to achieve this. Starting from this basic knowledge, the Orthodox Church should pay attention to the deviations and the fundamentalist attitudes promoted by certain “right-worshipping”, extremely eager groups, so that events such as those of Brâncoveni Monastery do not happen again.

Postface to the English-language edition

Evidently, interwar Old Calendarist movement of Romania was not a unitary phenomenon, with uniform manifestations in the Old Kingdom, Bessarabia and Transylvania. The emergence of Old Calendarism in Bessarabia and the radical form it took, which ultimately resulted in the abolition of this movement in 1935–1936, are closely related to the specific character of this old Romanian province and to its difficulties in integrating into the political, social, cultural and religious life of Greater Romania. On the contrary, in Transylvania the Old Calendarist movement did not find favorable ground for its propagation in the interwar period, and the unitary attitude of both lay and ecclesiastical press in Sibiu, Cluj or Arad – which regarded this phenomenon in the Old Kingdom or Bessarabia with astonishment and condescension – demonstrates that the Transylvanian territories had a different “flow” of ecclesiastical life, firmly anchored in the history of this province.

After the Great Union of 1918, Bessarabia was visited by a number of personalities coming from the Old Kingdom or Transylvania, eager to get to know this province isolated for over a century from the rest of the Romanian territory. Among those who documented their impressions of places, people or attitudes, were Onisfor Ghibu²⁹², writers Mihail Sadoveanu, Geo Bogza or Duiliu Zamfirescu (1858–1922)²⁹³, the professors of theology at the newly-established

²⁹² Onisfor Ghibu, *Călătorind prin Basarabia, Impresiile unui român ardelean [Travelling across Bessarabia. Impressions of a Romanian from Transylvania]*, Chișinău, Tipografia Eparhială, 1923 (contains several articles published in “Adevărul” newspaper, 9–12 September 1923); Onisfor Ghibu, *De la Basarabia rusească la Basarabia românească. Analiza unui proces istoric însoțită de 186 de documente [From Russian Bessarabia to Romanian Bessarabia. Analysis of a historical process accompanied by 186 documents]*, Cluj, 1926; Onisfor Ghibu lived in Bessarabia between 1926–1927, as editor of *România Nouă* review, senator of Orhei, and commissary general of the cultural organization “Astra pentru Basarabia”.

²⁹³ Duiliu Zamfirescu was commissary general of the Romanian government in Bessarabia, between 27 March and June 1918, when this position was replaced with that of military governor of Bessarabia. His notes on the state of affairs in Bessarabia were published in the journal *Îndreptarea* issued at Iași. “Despre Duiliu Zamfirescu și realitățile basarabene din anul 1918 [On Duiliu Zamfirescu and the 1918 Bessarabia]”, Ion Țurcanu, *Bessarabiana: teritoriul dintre Prut și Nistru în câteva ipostaze istorice și reflecții istoriografice [Bessarabiana: the territory between Prut and Nistru – a few historical moments and historiographi reflections]*, Cartdidact Publishing House, pp. 95–99.

Faculty of Orthodox Theology in Chișinău (1926): Nichifor Crainic and Gala Galaction.

Their accounts regarding Bessarabia express the enthusiasm that followed the Great Union of 1918²⁹⁴, as well as the general disenchantment with the Romanian administration, five years into it²⁹⁵. Indeed, after the great national achievement of 1918 it was expected that the political union be followed by a union in spirit, of all Romanian souls. The intellectual elites of Romania had great expectations and hopes that the provinces that had joined the Old Kingdom would bring their contribution by enhancing the economic and cultural potential of the Romanian nation, and reinvigorating public life in Romanian society.

Universal suffrage increased the number of direct voters, but did not bring about a real enhancement of the political role of the peasantry, and the political life of Bessarabia was impregnated with the Old Kingdom customs, mores and practices. In addition, the very harsh living circumstances caused the enthusiasm and confidence created by the Great Union to decline. Very soon, the euphoria following the Great Union gave way to general discontent, which only awaited the right moment to erupt.

Seeking an explanation for this change over such a short time, Onisfor Ghibu posited that the people of Bessarabia were not sufficiently “mature” to receive the great achievements recently obtained (national freedom, citizens’ freedoms, universal suffrage, distribution of land plots to peasants) since under Russian

²⁹⁴ “As I was leaving the capital of Bessarabia, in the last days of December...a peaceful feeling pervaded my soul: Bessarabia had successfully passed the critical stage; its Romanian future was safely ensured, in any case. It was based on the pure enthusiasm of an entire generation. The national consciousness had pervaded the souls of its leaders; Romanian culture had made unexpected strides in all walks of life, and confidence in the national forces was boundless. Two years of free life, in harmony with the nature and needs of the people, had achieved far more than a century of Russian “fatherly care” (Onisfor Ghibu, *Călătorind prin Basarabia*, p. 2); “We cannot delay by even a minute our cultural activity in Bessarabia. Nationalizing schools, institutes and all kinds of institutions; introducing extracurricular activities; instilling, in any way possible, the notion of common motherland into the souls of the peasantry; carrying out propaganda in the villages, through the Church; publishing school textbooks in both Cyrillic and Latin script – this our first and foremost duty” (Duiliu Zamfirescu, *Îndreptarea* no. 43, of 2 June 1918, p. 98).

²⁹⁵ “As you talk to the few Bessarabians still honest and uncorrupted, you fall into terrible despair. Almost no one still has hopes for the future. All of them lament the union with Romania, under the circumstances it took place (...) The peasants speak with disdain about Romania, and as soon as they feel you are not one of them, they show their distrust. You must absolutely pass for “Moldovan” [Bessarabian] or Transylvanian in order to regain their trust. Today’s state of affairs seems transitory to them. They cannot believe that today’s government will last. They think Russia is certain to regain power...” (Onisfor Ghibu, *Călătorind prin Basarabia*, p. 8).

domination they had not fought for these achievements, as the Transylvanians had done for centuries under the Habsburg or Hungarian rule. On the other hand, the “official Romania” was making a great mistake believing that by introducing the Romanian language in Bessarabia, this province had been successfully Romanianized. The language in itself, Onisfor Ghibu argued, is far from synonymous with the culture and soul of a people²⁹⁶.

Indeed, even a cursory look at the Bessarabian church publications clearly indicates that this union of souls was a distant prospect. The *Noua Revistă Bisericească* [*New Churchly Journal*] wrote about the cold shoulder given to a group of clergymen from Bucharest, who were attending the third Congress of the Association of Orthodox Clergy in Cernăuți (25–26 September 1926) and the “regionalist” attitude of the Bessarabian priests who wanted the discussions to be centered on “*matters that are of closer interest to them*”: the matter of people’s unrest caused by the revised calendar, and the modification of statutes for the organization of the Church²⁹⁷. The journal *Luminătorul* of Bessarabia published polemical discussions between clergymen of Bessarabia and those coming from Bucharest in order to organize the Faculty of Theology in Chișinău. The Bessarabian priest Mihail Vasilache answered an article he deemed “defamatory” – which archimandrite Scriban had published at Bucharest –, going on to complain about the patronizing attitude of all “Old Kingdom ones” (the population of the Old Kingdom) towards Bessarabi²⁹⁸. Priest Vasilache mentioned the “duplicitous” attitude towards Bessarabia of the authorities in Bucharest, and the fact that the clergy across Prut river did not agree with “the exterior things” of Bessarabian clergy: their too long, too pompous services; their Russian cassocks; their long hair; the aspect of the Cathedral in Chișinău, (...) and many others (p. 735). The author concludes that “*coming among us, our brethren from the Old Kingdom keep undermining and sabotaging us. And, I think, not because we are truly in the wrong, but simply because they enjoy despising us.*”

As early as 1925, the Holy Synod had decided that the Easter of 1926 should be celebrated according to the revised calendar, on 4 April 1926. This decision was not welcomed by the Bessarabian clergy or the intellectuals in this Romanian province. The eparchial assembly of the Archdiocese of Chișinău (8–10 December

²⁹⁶ Onisfor Ghibu, *Călătorind prin Basarabia*, p. 10.

²⁹⁷ *Noua Revistă Bisericească*, year VII, no. 4–6, July–September 1926, pp. 106–108.

²⁹⁸ Rev. Mihail Vasilache, “De ce atâta deconsiderare? [Why so much disdain?]”, *Luminătorul*, no. 12, pp. 734–737.

1925) resolved to send to Bucharest an official delegation, comprised of priests Ioan Andronic and Pavel Guciuja and laymen Teodor Neaga, Pavel Latoțchi and Victor Mateevici, in order to submit to the Holy Synod a memorandum petitioning for the return to the “old style” (old calendar).

The matter of the calendar was debated during the Holy Synod meeting of December 1925. The communiqué issued to the press stated: “*Regarding the matter of the revised calendar, raised during this synodal meeting by a Bessarabian delegation, the Holy Synod firmly abides by the calendar revised by the Patriarchate of Constantinople, which remains mandatory for all Orthodox believers in the entire Romania.*” Thus the Bessarabian clergy were advised to send out pastoral letters; the eparchies adjoining the Metropolis of Moldavia were urged to resort to missionaries they could invite; the Ministry of Internal Affairs was required to offer support in this sense, by having its employees attend the church according to the revised calendar, or “style”, and preventing any celebrations of feasts according to the old calendar. The Holy Synod asked all leaders of political parties to prevent their political supporters from agitating the people by mentioning church matters during electoral campaigns, while asking intellectuals also to “*take every opportunity to explain things*” to those opposing the new, revised calendar²⁹⁹.

During the Synod meeting, a heated exchange took place between archbishop Gurie Grosu who declared that despite his efforts, the population rejected the revised calendar, and the Old Kingdom hierarchs who reproached him for failing to take strong measures. Moreover, certain hierarchs voiced their opinion that if the Bessarabian archbishop felt unable to implement the decision of the Holy Synod, then he should step down and resign from his office³⁰⁰. Saddened, archbishop Gurie spent the holidays at a monastery, instead of his residence in Chișinău, which was noted by the press³⁰¹. At the time, through the Statutes for the Organization of the Romanian Orthodox Church, the Metropolis of Bessarabia was

²⁹⁹ “Ședințele Sf. Sinod. Ziua IV. Chestiunea calendarului [The Holy Synod meetings. Day 4. The matter of the calendar]”, *Universul* no. 294 of 20 December 1925; “Ședințele Sf. Sinod ziua V [The Holy Synod meetings. Day 5]”, *Universul* no. 294 of 21 December 1925; Rev. Vasile Secieru, “Chestiunea calendarului “îndreptat” din Basarabia în atenția Sfântului Sinod de la București [The issue of the “amended” calendar in Bessarabia tackled by the Holy Synod in Bucharest]”, *Confluențe bibliologice*, nr. 3–4 (2014) pp. 97–101;

³⁰⁰ “Prelații basarabeni cer revenirea provizorie la calendarul vechiu [Bessarabian clergy require a temporary return to the old calendar]”, *Adevărul* no. 12890 of 20 December 1925;

³⁰¹ “Arhiepiscopul Gurie s-a retras la mănăstire [Archbishop Gurie withdraws to a monastery]”, *Universul*, no. 1 of 1 January 1926.

only formally established, and Bessarabia was operationally divided into three eparchies: of Chişinău, of Bălţi and Hotin, and of Cetatea Albă. Gurie Grosu had the title of Archbishop of Chişinăul Hotinului, which he held from 1920 to 1936, when the Church of Bessarabia was elevated to the rank of Metropolis³⁰².

Old Calendarist agitation instigated in Bessarabia gained visibility in the Old Kingdom, and especially in Bessarabia, during the celebration of the Christmas of 1925 and the New Year 1926. According to the lay or ecclesiastical publications, the instigators were itinerant monks, unscrupulous politicians, or communist emissaries³⁰³. Part of the lay press was quite optimistic and appreciated that “*the Bessarabians are not that hostile towards the new calendar*”, and the propaganda carried out by Church authorities would soon bear fruit³⁰⁴.

Other articles, however, noted that the much-publicized matter of adoption of the revised calendar was exceeding the boundaries of religious life and reached the alarming proportions of social unrest. In the eparchy of Chişinău, Christmas and the New Year were celebrated in accordance with the old calendar. Most priests in this eparchy, encouraged (according to the journalists) by the tolerant attitude of their archbishop, were vehement about this matter (the press mentions, among others, priests Ştiucă and Andronic – members of the eparchial consistory, as well as protopresbyter Gudina)³⁰⁵. In February 1926, incidents also occurred at Chişinău when, on the feast of the *Lord's Presentation* according to the old calendar (15 February 1926) “thousands of men and women” gathered outside the Archdiocese headquarters and asked for the religious service, threatening that otherwise they would hide in cellars and basements, and would officiate the service there “according to the old tradition.”³⁰⁶

³⁰² Gurie Grosu, “Un părinte spiritual al Basarabiei. Mitropolitul Gurie Grosu [A spiritual father of Bessarabia. Metropolitan Gurie Grosu]” in Ion Ţurcanu, *Bessarabiana: teritoriul dintre Prut şi Nistru în câteva ipostaze istorice şi reflecţii istoriografice [Bessarabiana; The territory between Prut and Dniester. Historical moments and historiographic reflections]*, Cartdidact, pp. 217–229.

³⁰³ “Noi agitaţii în chestia calendarului [New agitations around the matter of the calendar]”, *Renaşterea* no. 2, 13 January 1926, p. 7.

³⁰⁴ “Propaganda de la sate pentru primirea noului calendar [Propaganda among the peasants, in favour of the new calendar]”, *Universul* no. 13 of 17 January 1926. About the advocacy of the revised calendar carried out by bishop Dionisie of Ismail, the article optimistically states: “*Bishop Dionise returned from his campaign with the belief that such actions will soon placate the Moldovans [Bessarabians], restoring the obedience and deference they have shown for centuries to the Christian church and its representatives.*”

³⁰⁵ *Cuvântul* no. 359 of 18 January 1926.

³⁰⁶ *Universul* no. 39 of 17 January 1926, “O mare fierbere la Chişinău [Great unrest at Chişinău].”

The situation was complicated by the electoral campaign for the elections of 1926, regarded as some of the most corrupt and most violent of those times³⁰⁷. As early as December 1925, when the eparchial assembly of Chișinău met in order to debate the matter of the revised calendar, the press noted that the discussions “*had a political character. If we remember that its supporters were the leaders of two political parties – Inculeț of the Liberal party, and Mr Neaga Șiraev and Protopresbyter Cuciujna of Averescu’s party, we will comprehend the insistence in requesting the return to the new calendar*”³⁰⁸. Moreover, the press surmised that the government, in view of the future elections in Bessarabia, aimed to revisit this decision and allowed its representatives in Bessarabia, such as Ioan Inculeț, to take a stance that contradicted the official one³⁰⁹. Although in January 1926, the press noted that Archbishop Gurie “*continues very fervently the propaganda in favour of the new calendar*”, in reference to his speeches and the measures he took against the priests who continued to observe the old calendar³¹⁰, towards the end of that month newspapers mentioned their suspicion that he, too, followed the same electoral logic and had a hidden agenda, aiming to secure political support for the position of metropolitan³¹¹.

The situation became more complicated during the Holy Week of 1926, when all prefects in Bessarabia received a circular letter from the Minister of Internal Affairs, Octavian Goga. The circular announced that, “*in the interest of public order in Bessarabia*”, the government had decided to take no action against those Orthodox worshippers who wanted to celebrate Easter according to the old calendar³¹². The problem, as presented by the lay press, was that this document issued by the Ministry of Internal Affairs was circulated only among

³⁰⁷ Alexandru Nicolaescu, “Alegerile parlamentare din 1926 reflectate în presa vremii [The parliamentary elections of 1926 as reported in the times’ press]”, *Anuarul Inst. de Cerc. Socio-Umane* Sibiu, vol. XXV, 2018, pp. 139–171; “Administrația și procesul electoral din România în anii democrației parlamentare (1919–1937) [The electoral management and process in Romania in the years of parliamentary democracy (1919–1937)]”, *Annales Universitatis Apulensis, Series Historica*, 8, 2004, pp. 183–192.

³⁰⁸ *Universul* no. 289 of 15 December 1925.

³⁰⁹ “Angajamentele domnului Inculeț. Domnia a vorbit în Adunarea Eparhială despre schimbarea calendarului [Where the loyalty of Mr Inculeț lies. He spoke in the Eparchial Assembly about the calendar reform]”, *Universul* no. 288 of 13 December 1925.

³¹⁰ “O schimbare radicală în chestiunea stilului nou în Basarabia [A radical change in the matter of the new calendar in Bessarabia]”, *Universul* no. 13 of 17 January 1926.

³¹¹ “Arhiepiscopul Gurie și reforma calendarului. Cum se explică atitudinea echivocă a înaltului prelat? [Archbishop Gurie and the calendar reform. How to explain the equivocal attitude of the hierarch?]", *Universul* no. 23 of 29 January 1926.

³¹² *Adevărul*, no. 12977, 4 April 1926.

the administration staff, while the priests in Basarabia did not receive any order to that effect. Consequently, they celebrated Easter according to the revised calendar, on 4 April, in the presence of the few believers who had accepted the revised calendar, while the majority of churchgoers preferred to wait until 2 May in order to celebrate the Lord's Resurrection according to the old calendar. On 2 May, however, the endorsers of the old calendar found that there were no priests to officiate the service in their villages, since the priests had already celebrated Easter. Thus, entire villages were deprived of the Resurrection service, and their dwellers were bitter and discontent³¹³.

In late April 1926, prime minister Alexandru Averescu was in Basarabia, on electoral campaign, in view of the upcoming parliamentary elections. On this occasion he declared: "The previous government decided to carry out a calendar reform. This was perceived by the population of Bessarabia as a departure from the ancestral tradition. In order to avoid any misunderstandings and conflicts, we have resolved to abide by the decision to be taken by a forthcoming ecumenical council. Until then, we have ordered that the Holy Easter should be celebrated by each as they wish"³¹⁴. A few days later, in Chişinău, where he was presenting the program that aimed to "accelerate the process of the definitive union in spirit of Bessarabia to Romania", he addressed again the issue of the calendar, declaring that "celebrating Easter according to the old style [calendar] has been accepted only for this year", and the matter would be settled by an ecumenical council in which the representatives of all Orthodox Churches would take part"³¹⁵.

In Transylvania, Old Calendarist agitation was almost non-existent, except for a few isolated incidents around the Easter of 1926³¹⁶. However, the ecclesiastical press of Transylvania commented on the "saddening news" coming from Bucharest about the revision of the calendar. One of the priests who published articles in

³¹³ "Unde duc conflictele de competență. Basarabenii nu și-au serbat încă Paștele [The result of competence conflicts. Bessarabians have yet to celebrate Easter]", *Adevărul*, no. 12986, 16 April 1926.

³¹⁴ "Guvernul încearcă să «cucerească» Basarabia" [The Government attempts to «conquer» Bessarabia"], *Adevărul* no. 12997, 30 April 1926.

³¹⁵ "D. general Averescu la Chişinău [General Averescu in Chişinău]", *Universul* no. 101, 5 May 1926.

³¹⁶ Three Bessarabian priests circulated on Christmas eve a motion urging the population not to celebrate feasts according to the revised calendar. The three were from Tabăra Monastery, in Bessarabia. They were sent before the military court prosecutor for disobedience to the law and disdain for religion (*Renașterea* no. 17, 25 April 1926, p. 7); The Russian priest Vladimir Poneacar, sent by the Bolsheviks to Bessarabia in order to cause unrest among the population, was seized by the authorities and expelled from the country (*Renașterea* no. 20, 16 May 1926, news, p. 6).

Renașterea journal of Cluj addressed a warm, sincere advise to his Bessarabian brethren, as one who had visited Bessarabia repeatedly and had been impressed with the beauty of services held in the Cathedral of Chișinău: “We want and hope you will continue to be the same devout servants of Orthodoxy, we want to learn much from you, we want you to reconcile yourselves to the decision of the Holy Synod and believe that changing the calendar is in no way detrimental to Orthodoxy. We, the Transylvanians, have accepted this change without any commotion, although we are keen to preserve our Orthodoxy and have fought hard to keep it throughout the centuries. Transylvania is the classical land of struggle among denominations. Nowhere else in the world have there been so many fights, righteous or unrighteous, and especially so many attempts to destroy Orthodoxy. If we, who for so many centuries have been exposed to all those bids to separate us from our ancestral Church, have remained good Orthodox and have accepted the calendar change without opposition, then you have nothing to fear, for you have so many means to convince your faithful, and in your land Orthodoxy is so strong. I wrote this with the sincere intention to offer some help to our brethren in need, and hoping to hear the news that there is peace and goodwill in Bessarabia”³¹⁷.

Equally problematic was the celebration of Easter in the year 1929 – which due to its consequences in the long run, was a turning point in the evolution of the Old Calendarist movement. As early as 1928, the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church had decided that the Easter of 1929 should be celebrated according to the revised calendar, on 31 March 1929; all hierarchs of the Romanian Orthodox Church underwrote this decision. Later on, given the great unrest created in Bessarabia, metropolitan Gurie wrote a memorandum where he pointed out that the 1928 decisions on the matter of the calendar cannot be definitive, because not all hierarchs had attended the respective meeting, and the opinion of some of those in attendance was actually that Easter should be celebrated according to the old calendar, on 5 May 1929. Most importantly, this meeting had not been attended by the Patriarch³¹⁸. Based on this memorandum, metropolitan Gurie requested a meeting of the Holy Synod, which should issue a definitive decision on the

³¹⁷ Rev. Patriciu Curea, “Pentru frații din Basarabia [To our brethren in Bessarabia]”, *Renașterea*, 24 January 1926, p. 2.

³¹⁸ “Unitatea Bisericii Ortodoxe amenințată. Se desparte Biserica Basarabeană? [The unity of the Orthodox Church under threat. Is the Bessarabian Church about to split?]” *Cuvântul* no. 1339, 13 January 1929.

matter of the calendar, and inform the hierarchs on the proportions taken on by the movement in Bessarabia.

The lay press reported that Holy Synod's discussions around the calendar were "very animated", and sought to identify the best solution of the three possible ones, namely: fully maintaining the previous decisions, because any revisiting would damage the prestige of the Church and its Synod among the faithful; maintaining the decision to celebrate Easter on 31 March 1929, but "in applying this directive, take into account the possibilities of executing it. In other words, the Synod maintains its decision, but leaves it to the bishops to decide for their own eparchies the date for celebrating Easter, depending on the possibilities"; and finally, the applicability of this decision should depend on its acceptance by the other Orthodox Churches. And since this acceptance had not occurred yet, the old dates of the unrevised calendar should be maintained and thus the Easter of 1929 should be celebrated on 5 May³¹⁹.

It was finally decided to celebrate the Holy Easter on 31 March 1929, as decided in 1928; this date complied with all canonical provisions of the Ecumenical Council of Nicea. The clergy and laymen in the service of the Church were invited to advise the population not to be concerned about the date of the Holy Easter, but rather about the "means of cleansing the souls tainted by sins, in order to be worthy of celebrating the Holy Resurrection of the Lord"³²⁰. This decision was confirmed by the Synod of the Orthodox Church convened on 18 February 1929, when it was decided, in order to prove the solidarity of all members of the Holy Synod in the matter of Easter celebration on 31 March, to release the following communiqué: "*In compliance with the canonical rules and the tradition of our Holy Church, the celebration of the great feast of the Resurrection was set for the date of 31 March. This decision was made known to the clergy and laypeople by our pastoral letter. No deviation from this decision of the Holy Synod is, or can be, admitted*".

In March 1929, given the agitations in the Old Kingdom and Bessarabia, deputy Nicolae Lupu sent to the Prime Minister and the ministers of Religious

³¹⁹ "Today the Synod will decide. The Transylvanian clergy in favor of maintaining the date of 31 March and the Bessarabian clergy opting for 5 May", *Adevărul* no. 13834, 26 January 1929, p. 3.

³²⁰ *Revista Apostolul*, no. 4, of 15 February 1929. Excerpt from the summary of the meeting of 24 January 1929: "The Holy Synod decides: Maintaining the date of Holy Easter on 31 March, as printed in all calendars, especially since the following years will no longer face the same difficulties in calculating the date, as this year. The Holy Synod urges all competent sons of the Church to advise the seduced ones not to fall under the spell of agitators, who are dangerous to the country and to its institutions".

Affairs and Internal Affairs an interpellation on the situation created by the decision of the Holy Synod concerning the Easter date³²¹. Dr. Lupu, who described himself not as a politician, but as a devout son of the Church, declared on the podium of the Parliament that “*avid for reforms since 1928, in the absence of the Patriarch, the Synod chaired by metropolitan Pimen, decided to change the date of Easter*” and that this decision was made “*following the pressure put by a self-centred man, metropolitan Nicolae Bălan*”³²². Therefore he harshly demanded the Prime Minister to intervene and to persuade the Church’s Synod to reverse its decision.

The Government’s response, read out on this occasion, took note of the decision of the Holy Synod that the Easter should be celebrated on 31 March. However, the bishops of Bessarabia, in the superior interest of the Church and of public order, were urged to find ways in which to appease those discontent with the date of 31 March, who should be offered comfort on the date they desired, without being subject to penalty from the Church authorities. “*It goes without saying – the respective declaration stated – that the government, in the interest of public order, of the general peace of souls, of the respect for the freedom of conscience of the country’s citizens, will not make use of the force of state in order to prevent anyone from celebrating the Holy Easter whenever their religious conscience dictates so.*”

The protagonist of this episode related to the celebration of Easter in 1929 certainly was again Metropolitan Gurie of Bessarabia. He was described by the newspapers of Bucharest, as well as the Transylvanian press, as a providential hierarch whose pastoral tact was able to de-escalate a very complicated situation, by applying the principle of *oikonomia*, of leniency, whereas a rebel’s unwise actions would have led to schism within the Church³²³. The newspapers *Adevărul* and *Cuvântul*, respectively, published interviews with Metropolitan Gurie presenting

³²¹ “Hotărârea Guvernului în chestia datei Paștilor. Interpelarea d-lui Lupu în Cameră. Răspunsul domnului Maniu [Government decision on the date of Easter. Mr Lupu’s interpellation in the Chamber. The answer of Mr Maniu]”, *Adevărul* nr. 13869, 10 March 1929, p. 3.

³²² Nicolae Bălan (1882–1955) was the metropolitan of Transylvania between 1920–1955.

³²³ *Renașterea* no. 13, 31 March, pp. 5–6, however stated: “The holidays this year are perturbed, in our Romanian Church, by the stubbornness grasping the hearts of our brethren in Bessarabia, part of Moldavia, and here and there in other parts of the country. It appears that in their souls, love for the foreigners, enemies and foes outweighs love for those of the same blood and faith. Otherwise, we cannot understand how Metropolitan Gurie himself forsakes his duty as a shepherd and teacher of his people, and allows himself to follow the counsel of the ignorant and misinformed. He flouted his own signature he put on the decision of the Holy Synod regarding the celebration of the Holy Easter both the second time, and especially the first time, when he was the proponent and advocate of the correct date – 31 March.”

his views on the revised calendar. The metropolitan stated that the revised “style” (calendar) was neither Roman-Catholic nor Protestant, but it was the calendar proposed by the Holy Fathers of the Council of Nicea. The Orthodox, right-worshipping people ought to obey the mother-Church and abide by her decisions. Metropolitan Gurie declared he fully agreed with the Synod’s decision to celebrate Easter on 31 March, a just decision in agreement with the canons of the Council of Nicea. On the other hand, however, his opinion was that the Easter of 1929 should be exceptionally celebrated on 5 May, “to placate the population”³²⁴.

When a journalist asked whether he deemed himself a “rebel” and whether he was aware that his initiatives caused dissent in the Church, the hierarch answered: *“I am not a rebel. But I am alone. No one supports me. Neither the intellectuals, who could offer spiritual help by propaganda; nor the authorities, who could set an example by attending the Church. Instead, everyone says that the Synod should revisit its decision on the date of Easter celebration. And I am not God, to be able to govern a whole region.”*

One of the close collaborators of Metropolitan Gurie, Constantin N. Tomescu noted in the pages of his *Diary* that “the archbishop was known to be tormented”³²⁵, with reference to the difficult situation of this hierarch in relation to the priests in the eparchial administration, who refused to accept the revised calendar – be

³²⁴ “Mitropolitul Gurie împotriva datei fixate pentru Paști [Metropolitan Gurie against the date set for Easter]”, *Adevărul* newspaper no. 13824, 14 January 1929, p. 3; “Importante declarații făcute “Cuvântului” de IPS Gurie, mitropolitul Basarabiei [Important declarations to newspaper *Cuvântul* by His Eminence Gurie, metropolitan of Bessarabia]”, *Cuvântul* newspaper no. 1339, 16 January 1929 (The article quotes statements made by Gurie at Chișinău to the delegate of the newspaper, on 13 January, when the decision to convene an extraordinary meeting of the Holy Synod had not yet been made public): “However it would be advisable, given that the people are unschooled, unprepared, unable to accommodate even just decisions,... it would be advisable for the Synod to keep this situation in mind and accept to celebrate Easter according to the old calendar this year. It is the only way to placate the people and the Synod’s authority would not be impaired in the least”.

³²⁵ Constantin N. Tomescu, *Jurnal din viața mea* (publicat sub egida Ministerului Educației, Culturii și Cercetării al Republicii Moldova. Institutul de Istorie), Cartdidact, Chișinău, 2018, pp. 810–810. Constantin Nicolae Tomescu arrived in Bessarabia in the summer of 1918, accompanying Nicodim Munteanu (the future Patriarch of Romania), who had been appointed archbishop of Bessarabia; the latter had invited him to work as secretary of the Metropolis of Bessarabia. He stayed until 28 June 1940, when like many other Romanians he had to flee and seek refuge to Romania. He returned with the Romanian army in 1941, then settled definitively in Romania in 1944. He was arrested and imprisoned by the communist regime (George Enache and Silvia Corlăteanu-Granciuc, “Chișinăul interbelic in memoriile secretarului Mitropoliei Basarabiei, prof. Constantin N. Tomescu [Interwar Chișinău in the memoirs of the secretary of the Metropolis of Bessarabia, prof. Constantin N. Tomescu]”, pp. 115–119).

they deputies in the Eparchial Assembly, such as rev. Pavel Guciugna³²⁶ or eparchial counsellors such as Pavel Lotoțchi³²⁷, or Government representatives who often had a duplicitous attitude in the matter (here the diary indicated Ioan Inculeț, the minister for Bessarabia). In general, the lay newspapers I was able to find tended to cast blame on the hierarch of Chișinău, publishing articles under alarming headlines with regard to the schism within the Church in Bessarabia³²⁸.

In this context, I mention the Russian-language newspaper *Nabat (Alarm)* issued at Chișinău, which was at the time directed by the liberal-affiliated lawyer Oprea. According to the contemporary publications, *Nabat* specialized in stirring agitations around the calendar – agitations “on which communist propaganda is based”; it was issued in 8,000 copies daily, of which 5,000 copies in Chișinău only (a great number for that epoch and for Bessarabia)³²⁹. A Committee of Orthodox Christians was formed around this newspaper – a body of upholders of the old calendar, which aimed to bring together adherents of this movement, either intellectuals or delegates from the Bessarabian villages³³⁰.

This Russian-language newspaper of Chișinău published several biased articles, based on more or less reliable sources, which created confusion over the matter of the calendar. Thus in early January 1929, one newspaper issue claimed that the Holy Synod had allowed the people to accept union with the Catholics³³¹

³²⁶ Pr. Radu Petre Mureșan, “Pavel Guciugna (1881–1953)”, in *Chipuri de lumină [Luminous Figures]*, vol. 2, *Renumiți preoți de mir din trecutul Arhiepiscopiei Bucureștilor [Renowned priests in the history of the Archdiocese of Bucharest]*, Bucharest, Cuvântul Vieții Publishing House, 2015, pp. 21–23.

³²⁷ Paul Lotoțchi, former Seminary professor, demanded the implementation of the decision of the Council of Constantinople – 1583, passed one year after the adoption of the Gregorian calendar, namely that the laypeople accepting the calendar should be excommunicated, and the priests defrocked.

³²⁸ “Most priests in this parish, encouraged by the archbishop’s attitude, are so intransigent about this matter, that even those among them who hold administrative positions refuse to accept the arguments in favour of the new calendar... This situation cannot change as long as archbishop Gurie keeps his ambiguous attitude or indifference to the state of affairs. His lack of authority is interpreted as encouraging disobedience”. Examples given: priests Știucă and Andronic – members of the eparchial consistory, priest Popovici, all of them teachers at the Theological Seminary. Cf “Scandalul bisericesc din Basarabia [Church scandal in Bessarabia]”, *Cuvântul* no. 359, 18 January 1926. The article’s author states that protopresbyter Guciugna had taken advantage of the issue of the calendar for his electoral campaign, promising that if elected he would re-instate the old calendar.

³²⁹ *Universul*, no. 49 of 3 March 1929.

³³⁰ Ibidem, Note 1734/ 15 April 1929, page 13.

³³¹ “Instigații pe tema noului calendar [Instigations around the new calendar]”, *Universul* no. 3 of 5 January 1929.

and another issue told the public that the Metropolitan had ordered them to celebrate Christmas according to the old calendar³³². Archbishop Gurie Grosu sued the newspaper for spreading misinformation and for calling the population to insubordination to the lay ecclesiastic authorities.

As far as Transylvania was concerned, the daily newspaper *Gazeta Transilvaniei* published an interview with the Minister for Transylvania, dr Voicu Nițescu (1883–1954)³³³, who declared that the population of Transylvania was willing to comply with the decision of the Holy Synod – not because the region was dominated by the “united” Church [Greek-Catholic Romanian Church United with Rome], as it was often suggested, but because “here, unlike elsewhere, there are no agitators to stir unrest for political reasons. In Transylvania there are no agitators, not even against the Old Kingdom...”. In early 1929, a brief piece of news published in *Telegraful Român* revealed that in the Capital city there was turmoil because of the calendar; the newspaper requested authorities to take a firm stance “to put an end to it definitively”³³⁴.

In February 1929, *Telegraful Român* newspaper ran an interesting editorial on Old Calendarism³³⁵. The article’s author enumerated the defining traits of Orthodoxy and showed how Orthodoxy as it is experienced in Transylvania differs from the Orthodoxy “across the mountains”, that is, in the Old Kingdom: “*Orthodoxism is bodily suffering, social Tolstoyism (nonresistance to evil), separating oneself from the worldly realities which are tempting and sinful and ignoring them; it is resignation, purification and salvation. It is resistance and transcendental contemplation. But above all, it is discipline... On the occasion of calendar revision, the Orthodoxy living in the souls of the people across Carpathians – somehow deviated because of anarchic resistance, reacted in such a manner that the gravity center of the true Orthodox spirit falls outside discipline*”.

The author goes on to show that the Orthodox Church of Transylvania, despite all accusations of Protestantism in dogmas and Jesuitism in methods, has always identified itself with the historical, social, political and national aspirations of the people, has given a historical dimension to its social role, and the hierarchs of Transylvania, beginning with Andrei Șaguna, have been the “national counsellors

³³² *Cuvântul* no. 1343 of 17 January 1929.

³³³ *Gazeta Transilvaniei* no. 30 of 20 March 1929.

³³⁴ “Earăși calendarul [The calendar, again]”, *Telegraful Român* no. 4 of 9 January 1929.

³³⁵ Petre Țincu, “Calendarul și ortodoxismul ardelean [The calendar and Transylvanian orthodoxism]” in *Telegraful Român*, no. 17, of 27 February 1929.

of the Romanian soul in Transylvania”. Consequently, any matter of church existence in Transylvania automatically became a matter of national existence. In the concrete case of the calendar, the author pointed out that “Transylvania accepted with trust, faith and respect the decisions of the wise hierarchs. This is true discipline, orderly and educated, stemming congenitally and organically from the spirit of the Transylvanian tradition of orthodoxism. This is why, when His Eminence Nicolae of Transylvania declared recently: “In my eparchy there is no unrest around the matter of the calendar!” he expressed something of the impressive, harmonious character of the Transylvanian Orthodox traditionalism – an epitome of the everlasting Christian discipline”³³⁶.

The Theological Review [*Revista Teologică*] issued at Sibiu published a heated polemic with the lay publications of Bucharest, which rejected the date set by the Holy Synod for the Easter of 1929. In one issue of his review, Father Dumitru Stăniloae, who was in Munich at the time, published an extensive study starting from the remark that “our newspaper has met with unexplainable, unjustified hostility” the decision of the Holy Synod and that the “the reason for their indignation and their central argument has been that the Council of Nicea decided, on this matter, that the Easter should always and unconditionally celebrated after the Jewish Passover”. In response to this article, Father Dumitru Stăniloae argued that the Council of Nicea did not decide that the Christian Easter must be celebrated after the Jewish Passover and it generally did not make Christian Easter dependent on the Jewish Passover in any way. On the contrary, the great Romanian theologian clarified, the decision of the Council went against those who made the date for Easter Sunday dependent on the Judaic calculation. They are commanded to abide by the Christian cycle established by the Church, independently from the Jewish one³³⁷.

When dr. Nicolae Lupu (1876–1947) took the floor in a Parliament session, addressing the Old Calendarist agitations, his intervention was regarded by the

³³⁶ Declaration of Nicolae Bălan. In a short conversation with the journalists, he told them: “Such things could not happen in my eparchy. The priests and faithful in my eparchy do not cause unrest over the calendar” („The Holy Synod meeting to settle the matter of the calendar”, *Adevărul* no. 13832, 24 January 1929, p. 5).

³³⁷ Rev. Dumitru Stăniloae, “Sinodul dela Niceea împotriva Postiudaștilor [The Council of Nicea against post-judaism]” in *Revista Teologică*, no. 5–6, May-June 1929, pp. 163–177. One of the articles refuted by Father Dumitru Stăniloae (G. Racoveanu, “Rătăcirea sinodală. Necanonicitatea hotărârii sinodale”) had been published in *Cuvântul* newspaper of 31 January 1929.

Transylvanian press as a curiosity³³⁸. “*Orthodox Transylvania* – stated an article published by *Telegraful Român* – has over seven decades’ experience of constitutional ecclesiastical life. During this time, there has been not a single case where churchly corporations with lay members claimed the right to interfere in spiritual matters, dogmatic or canonical, which are exclusively the bishops’ competence”. The ecclesiastical press in Transylvania ironically noted that Dr. Nicolae Lupu, discontent with the Synod’s decision to have the Holy Easter celebrated on 31 March 1929, asked Iuliu Maniu, president of the Council of Ministers, to change the date of the Holy Easter. Mr Iuliu Maniu said this was beyond his competence, as he was not the patriarch, and even if he were he could not grant the request of Mr Nicolae Lupu. The letter was sent to the Chamber and received the same answer. Then, according to this Transylvanian periodical, Dr. Nicolae Lupu was greatly upset and took out his anger on His Eminence Nicolae Bălan Metropolitan of Transylvania, claiming that the Synod’s decision had been prompted by the “vanity” of this Transylvanian hierarch. Generally, the reports of Transylvanian ecclesiastical press on the celebration of Easter, showed that people unfamiliar with the churchly matters and lacking theological education, thus unqualified, ventured to censor the Holy Synod and cause unrest around the Paschalion; driven by “interests alien to the welfare of our Orthodox Church”, they sought to trouble the waters in order to fish for advantages³³⁹.

The denouement of the interwar Old Calendarist movement occurred in 1935–1936, in the context of harsh measures taken by the authorities, which applied the *Law against new infringements of public order* – supplementary to Mârzescu Law, adopted in 1924³⁴⁰. Before this law was adopted, Constantin Rădulescu-Motru explained during a Parliamentary session (15 March 1933) why it was necessary to implement harsher legislation against infringements of public order. Just as the “Mârzescu Law” had been necessary at the time it was issued, because in Romania were circulating revolutionary ideas borrowed from the Bolshevik Russia, similarly in 1933 a new law was necessary in order to

³³⁸ “Dl. Dr. Nicolae Lupu și Pascalia [Dr Nicolae Lupu and the Paschalion]”, *Telegraful Român*, no. 21 of 13 March 1929.

³³⁹ Review by L. Fuiogă on the book by dr. Vasile Gheorghiu, *Data Paștilor după calendarul îndreptat și Tradiție* [Easter date according to the revised calendar and to Tradition], Tipografia Cărilor Bisericești. Bucharest, in *Revista Teologică* no. 5–6, May-June 1929, pp. 186–187.

³⁴⁰ Ministry of Justice, *Lege pentru Reprimarea unor noi infracțiuni contra liniștii publice* [Law against new infringements of public order], Monitorul Oficial și Imprimeriile Statului, Imprimeria Centrală, Bucharest, 1933.

curb the new political threat emerging in European countries, namely “*the collective crime, the revolution led by the organized mobs*”, that is, the far-right organizations. The novelty brought about by the Law of 1933 was that it no longer punished only individuals’ offences, but also the affiliation to associations aiming to “*alter or attempt to undermine the state’s security by violent means.*”³⁴¹ The new provisions supplementing *Mârzescu Law* criminalized the following activities: propaganda for creating subversive groups, associations or branches; participating in unauthorized demonstrations or marches; calls to rebellion; barricading; illegal use of weapons and uniforms.

In early 1935, the press announced that the situation in Bessarabia had taken an alarming turn. The unrest was no longer caused by peaceful peasants, fond of their ancestral customs, who simply requested to be allowed to observe the feast days according to the old calendar; in Bessarabia very serious things happened, posing a threat against the state’s order and security. Invariably, the time’s periodicals I could find, all stress the anti-social conduct of the adherents to the old calendar who – according to the press – had launched unprovoked assaults against the proponents of the revised calendar, or even against the gendarmes; moreover, “*Old Calendarists refuse to pay their taxes and obey the laws*”³⁴². Regrettably, the fanaticism of Old Calendarists and the inability of authorities to manage the tense situations, resulted in a number of incidents which left dead and injured, both among the Old Calendarists and the police force.

An article published in *Luminătorul* journal summarized the Old Calendarist issue in Bessarabia and the challenges that would follow its abolition: “*When this movement emerged, it did not receive due attention, that is, it was not opposed by all possible means. And the state authorities were completely passive and failed to take a stand against it. It had to come to this point, proving that the risk posed by this movement exceeds the religious sphere and that the very homogeneity of the state itself is threatened – since this movement has found supporters among those who work against the Romanian State. Only at this point have administrative measures been taken against the aggressive Old Calendarists whom the Church naturally cannot combat in an open fight. The heads of this movement have been arrested and sent before the Court, and their chapels have been demolished. From*

³⁴¹ C. Rădulescu-Motru, *Discursuri parlamentare [Discourses delivered before the Parliament]*. Edited, dictionary definitions, notes by Petre Dan-Străulești, Univers Științific Publishing House, Bucharest, 2008, pp. 259–261.

³⁴² “Atenție la Basarabia! [Heed Bessarabia!]” *Curentul* no. 2945, 16 April 1936.

here begins, or ought to begin, the action taken by the Church. Doing away with the aggressive Old Calendarism has not yet abolished this movement, for the passive Old Calendarism still exists and it may engulf the entire central Bessarabia. This is what we must fight against. But how?"³⁴³

The final manifestations of the Old Calendarist movement, in 1935, overlapped with the beginnings of the movement created by Petrache Lupu at Maglavit. This occasioned an interesting positioning of Transylvanian periodicals, which extolled Maglavit and enthusiastically praised the religious awakening it brought about and its similarities with Lourdes, whereas the "Old Calendarist foolishness" was harshly condemned by the same publications. *Renașterea*, a periodical published at Cluj, wrote about tens of thousands of pilgrims flocking to the "village of miracles", and the "fine movement of religious awakening, that should be especially welcomed", concluding: "*Such awakening movements cannot be stopped by the bayonets. Nobody has the right to touch the faith and religious sentiments of the people, especially when they take such impressive forms*"³⁴⁴. The same journal deplored the "Old Calendarist intemperance" and stated that only the lack of spiritual guidance as well as the passivity of authorities had led to the current situation³⁴⁵. Only *Telegraful Român* newspaper juxtaposed the two phenomena occasionally, placing them side by side and commenting that they demonstrated "*the great spiritual thirst of the peasant population*", still awaiting to be tapped into, as a precious source of spiritual richness, and to be put to good use for the revival of the moral-spiritual life of the entire nation"³⁴⁶.

³⁴³ Rev. Ant. Luțcan, "Stilismul [Old Calendarism]", *Luminătorul* no. 12, 1936 ???, p. 755.

³⁴⁴ The pilgrimage to Maglavit, *Renașterea* no. 31–32, 4 August 1935, p. 2; *Renașterea* nr 36, 8 September 1935, p. 4; "Maglavitul merge spre glorie [Maglavit marches towards glory]", *Renașterea* no. 37, 15 September 1935, p. 3: "Toate semnele arată că vom avea un Lourdes românesc [Everything points to a Romanian Lourdes]".

³⁴⁵ "It is regrettably that things should come to this. Had the State intervened early on, and cleanse Moldova of the agents stirring unrest, be they ignorant monks or communist emissaries, certainly Old Calendarism would have quickly disappeared. The situation is more difficult now. However, in close collaboration with the Church, further harm can still be prevented" (*Renașterea* 38, 20 September 1936, p. 4 with reference to the bloody incident of Piatra Neamț); "Driven by sick fanaticism, they travel to villages where they cause regrettable commotion or exaggerations. Sadly, because of the lack of careful, fatherly guidance, the peasantry was allowed to go astray and fall into such great error („Excesele stilștilor", *Renașterea*, no. 40, 4 October 1936, p. 4; on the previous page a lengthy article was entitled "Minunea de la Maglavit în lumina Evangheliei [The miracle of Maglavit in light of the Gospel]".

³⁴⁶ "Telegraful Român", no. 38 of 8 September 1935.

During the early years of the communist regime in Romania, two Old Calendarist factions received an authorization to function (operating license): the group named “The Traditionalist Christian Cult [Cultul Creștin Tradiționalist]”, headed by Ion Movileanu, and headquartered in Mircești-Putna, respectively the “Religious Association of Eastern Traditionalist Christians [Asociația Religioasă a Creștinilor Tradiționaliști de Răsărit]” headed by Gheorghe Iacobaș and Gheorghe Moșneagu with Glicherie Tănase as their spiritual director, headquartered at Târgu Neamț. According to the archive documents I have examined, there was strong rivalry between these two Old Calendarist groups, which turned to the state institutions (the Ministry of Religious Affairs, as well as the Council of Ministers and the Ministry of Justice) for arbitration, but also to disparage each other and complain to the state authorities³⁴⁷.

In 1948, when the new Law on Religious Affairs was passed, none of these two Old Calendarist factions continued to be acknowledged by the Romanian State. In the same year took place the Panorthodox Conference of Moscow (8–18 July 1948) where the Eastern Patriarchs decided that the fixed-date holidays should be celebrated according to the calendar adopted by the Holy Synod of each Church, while the Easter date would be celebrated according to the unrevised calendar. Although this Conference was not attended by Old Calendarists, its decisions indirectly concerned them. Thus, following the Panorthodox Conference of Moscow, the time gap between the unrevised and the revised calendar could no longer justify the existence of Old Calendarism as a distinct denomination, and the movement became an internal matter of the Romanian Orthodox Church. Both events marked a turning point for the entire Old Calendarist movement.

“The Traditionalist Christian Cult [Cultul Creștin Tradiționalist]” led by Ion Movileanu gained much visibility after 1948; it stood out due to its sustained legal action aimed at obtaining juridical recognition, by submitting several petitions to the Ministry of Religious Affairs and other state institutions. However, in September 1954, this Old Calendarist faction was removed from the registry of legal persons. Surprisingly for those harsh times under the communist regime, Ion Movileanu sued the Ministry of Religious Affairs, demanding the Court to note that this cult had been acknowledged by the state in 1946, and to oblige the

³⁴⁷ Radu Petre Mureșan, *Istoria Stilismului în România*, p.68.

Ministry to pay 100 lei/day as periodic penalty payments, until “the cult’s demand is satisfied.”³⁴⁸

The 1954 correspondence between the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Prosecutor General’s Office of the Romanian People’s Republic is still extant, whereby the latter institution asked for details on the reasons for denying legal recognition to this organization. The Ministry of Religious Affairs considered that legal acknowledgement of this faction would be tantamount to “*authorizing a movement that causes agitations, disturbance, dissent, which would undermine the unity of the working people and implicitly the political bases of our people’s state*”³⁴⁹. The same correspondence reveals that the Traditionalist Christian Cult had been accidentally acknowledged by the communist authorities, due to the fact that they had insufficient information on the respective organization: “*the fraction “Traditionalist Christian Cult” was recognized as independent religious association, by the error (!?) of the former minister Constantin Burducea, because of his insufficient information on the membership and practices of this religious group.*”³⁵⁰

It is not certain that a “mistake” had been made by the Ministry of Religious Affairs in those early times of the communist regime in Romania, when the Inspectors for Religious Affairs were very knowledgeable about the doctrines and practices of religious organizations and watched them closely³⁵¹. It is known, however, that at the time there was another Old-Calendarist group in Romania, namely the Old-Rite, or Old-Ritualist Christians (Lipovans). These were the descendants of Russians who had not accepted the reforms undertaken by Patriarch Nikon (the 17th century), but left the Tsarist Empire and organized themselves as a metropolis whose see was located at Fântâna Albă (at the time in Bukovina, the Habsburg Empire). After the Greater Romania was formed, their number

³⁴⁸ The National Archives, records of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Directorate of Studies, File no. 1/ 1954, f. 365, Note of 1 September 1954 from the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the Legal Office.

³⁴⁹ The Ministry of Religious Affairs, Directorate of Studies, report dated 21 October 1953 (The Prosecutor General’s Office, the Socialist Republic of Romania – Directorate 4, f. 130).

³⁵⁰ The Ministry of Religious Affairs, Directorate of Studies, report dated 21 October 1953 (The Prosecutor General’s Office, the People’s Republic of Romania – Directorate 4, f. 130; Ministry of Religious Affairs, Minister’s Cabinet to the Prosecutor General’s Office, the People’s Republic of Romania – Directorate 4, 24 October 1953, f. 131).

³⁵¹ Adrian Nicolae Petcu, “Împuțernicitul de culte între conformism și asigurarea libertății religioase [Inspectors for Religious Affairs, between conformism and safeguarding religious freedom]”, *Caietele CNSAS [Selected Records of CNSAS]*, year VI, no. 1–2 (11–12)/2013, CNSAS Publishing House, Bucharest, 2014, pp. 7–82.

increased as Bessarabia and Bukovina had rejoined the motherland Romania, and the Metropolis of Fântâna Albă, known as the world centre of Lipovan Romanians, found itself now located on Romanian territory.

During the interwar period, the Lipovan's Old-Rite Orthodox Christian Cult [Cultul Creștin de Rit Vechi] was only tolerated in România, despite its requests to be granted official recognition. One reason for this attitude was that the Lipovans categorically refused to adopt the Gregorian calendar. In this context, as researcher George Enache pointed out, an official recognition of the old-rite (or old-ritualist) Christians – the Lipovans, would have been tantamount to an implicit recognition of the Julian calendar and, in fact, of the Old-Calendarist movement: *“The Lipovans have maintained the Julian calendar not because of the agents coming from across the Dnister, but because of their profoundly traditionalist character; however, given the Russian ethnic origin of these believers, the Romanian authorities continued to be suspicious of the Lipovan community... The confusion between the “old-rite believers” and “Old Calendarists (stylists)” has prompted the authorities to delay the official recognition of the Lipovan cult, because this would have meant, for the Old Calendarists who had split from Romanian Orthodoxy, an implicit recognition of the Julian calendar.”*³⁵²

In June 1940, when the Soviet army occupied Bessarabia and northern Bukovina, the Metropolitanate of Fântâna Albă moved to Brăila. Metropolitan Tihon (1942–1968) came into conflict with marshal Ion Antonescu because of his refusal to adhere to the revised calendar together with the Lipovan community he shepherded, and as a result he was placed in confinement at Tismana Monastery. After his release, in 1943, he sent memorandums to the Ministry of Religious Affairs requesting the official status of an acknowledged denomination for his community; however, this recognition came only in 1946, from the communist authorities. Mr. George Enache published a document issued in October-November 1948 by Galați Regional Directorate for State Security [Securitate], on the situation of Lipovan old-calendarist believers and of those who had left the Romanian Orthodox Church in 1924. The document is interesting, because it demonstrates that the newly-installed communist authorities had in mind the old solution proposed

³⁵² George Enache, “Aspecte privind istoria cultului creștin de rit vechi (lipovenii) în România în perioada interbelică și la începutul regimului comunist [Aspects in the history of the old-rite Christian cult (Lipovan) in Romania during the interwar period and the early years of the communist regime]”, in Marius Lazăr, Iulia-Elena Hossu, *Rușii lipoveni din România. Istorie, identitate, comunitate*, [The Lipovan Russians in Romania. History, identity, community], Institutul pentru studierea problemelor minorităților naționale, Cluj-Napoca, 2020, pp. 127–140

by Marshal Ion Antonescu, namely the merger between all Old Calendarist factions and the official Orthodox Church.

In April 1954, Ion Movileanu attempted an union of the Old Calendarist group he headed, with the old-rite Christians. In a petition sent in May 1954 to the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the Traditionalist Christian Cult requested “*approval for the federalization of our Church and the Church of Old-Rite Christian Cult in Brăila – which from the doctrinal standpoint shares the same worship practices.*”³⁵³ The petition argued that “the principle of federalization is the socialist principle”, that there were denominations which had already applied it – such as the Federation of Evangelical Cults in the People’s Republic of Romania, and that this solution, once authorized, would put an end to “hatred provocations” from the Old Calendarist Orthodox [Right-Worshipping] faction of Neamț, who “*are not favorable to the adoption of the socialist principle – federalization with the Lipovams, and who for this reason have corrupted eight parishes within our denominational Organization, such as Copăceni skete, Vidra raion.*”

The way in which this petition was drafted, indicates that the Traditionalist Christian Cult received legal assistance from a lawyer. The respective document stated that, if this federalization would be legally accomplished, with the approval of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, then the Traditionalist Christian Cult was willing to withdraw the legal action taken on the matter of its organization statutes (file 427/1954, 1 Mai Court of Law, Bucharest). On the other hand, if they received no answer within ten days of submitting the petition, they would consider that the Ministry implicitly approved their request³⁵⁴. Internal documents of the Ministry of Religious Affairs noted that Ion Movileanu was attempting an union between his faction and the old-rite Christians, under metropolitan Tihon, and commented on the reasons for this enterprise: “*the main reason for this action could only be the growing shortage of priests in the Old Calendarist communities. The Old Calendarist believers cannot easily become used to having religious services celebrated by persons outside the clergy.*” Therefore, one of the effective measures to be taken by the authorities, in order to “curb Old Calendarism”, was preventing the Old Calendarist priests or monks from travelling from village to village³⁵⁵.

³⁵³ Document sent to the Ministry by the Traditionalist Christian Cult, dated 20 May 1954.

³⁵⁴ The Ministry of Culture, Directorate of Studies, f. 147. Report on the Old Calendarists, 1 April 1954. Document received by the Ministry on 20 May 1954 from the Traditionalist Christian Cult.

³⁵⁵ The Ministry of Culture, Directorate of Studies, f. 87. Report on the Old Calendarists, 1 April 1954.

The answer given by the Ministry of Religious Affairs to the “federalization solution” proposed by Ion Movileanu is not known, but the idea of an union of the Old Calendarist movement was not abandoned. In October 1954, Ioan Movileanu, on behalf of the Traditionalist Christian Cult in Mircești and Dionisie Hugușanu, as the representative of the right-worshipping Christians, signed a short-lived *Act of union* whereby they decided that the patrimony of these two legal persons would merge, and the resulting community would be titled “The Traditionalist Christian Cult”³⁵⁶.

Whereas the *Traditionalist Christian Cult* [*Cultul Creștin Tradiționalist*] aimed to obtain an official acknowledgement from the state and to unify the entire Old Calendarist movement, among others by attracting old-rite Christians, *The Organization of Eastern Traditionalist Christians* [*Organizația Creștinilor Tradiționaliști de Răsărit*], headquartered at Slătioara, acted much more insidiously and covertly, apparently maintaining minimal relationships with the state authorities, and attempting to “conquer” parishes or monasteries which traditionally pertained to Ion Movileanu’s faction. This is best demonstrated by the “saga” of the Old Calendarist Skete of Copăceni-Vidra, established in 1946, immediately after the installation of the communist regime in Romania; several Old Calendarist families had been dwelling in the locality since the interwar period³⁵⁷.

Originally, *Sfântul Gheorghe* [*St George*] skete of Copăceni had belonged to the Traditionalist Christian Cult, as it was built on the estate of a member of this faction. It played an important role in spreading and organizing Old Calendarism across Wallachia and Transylvania. For instance, in 1954, the Old Calendarists in Covasna commune, *the Magyar Autonomous Region*, submitted to the Ministry of Culture a petition requesting that Emilian Pricop, a dweller of Copăceni skete, function as priest serving the believers in this parish; the petition was signed by 104 persons³⁵⁸.

My study *Old Calendarism: A History* presents a detailed account on the circumstances in which the Copăceni skete became a bone of contention between the two Old Calendarist organizations which operated after the installation of the communist regime in Romania: *The Traditionalist Christian Cult*, respectively the *Religious Association of Eastern Traditionalist Christians* [*Asociația Religioasă*

³⁵⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 607–608.

³⁵⁷ The National Archives, records of the Department of Religious Affairs, Directorate of Studies, File no. 1/ 1954, f. 500–504 (Report on the situation in the Archdiocese of Bucharest).

³⁵⁸ Ministry of Culture, Directorate of Studies, f. 87. Report on Old Calendarism, 1 April 1954.

a Creștinilor Tradiționaliști de Răsărit]³⁵⁹. Gradually, in 1955–1956, especially after the former bishop Galaction Cordon became a metropolitan, the skete of Copăceni was taken over by the group headquartered at Slătioara. By early 1957 – when Evloghie Oța donned bishop vestments and celebrated there the liturgy for the Lord’s Baptism according to the Old Calendar, remembering during the service Galaction Cordon as archbishop –, the village of Copăceni could be regarded as a fief of Slătioara.

An interesting letter sent to the Ministry of Religious Affairs by the Traditionalist Christian Cult denounced the creation of an “*axis Slătioara – Găgești – Copăceni, hostile to interdenominational harmony and to public order*”, reminding of the similar case of Vladimirești Monastery and stating that “a political network is being created” at Vidra. In this context was mentioned a certain Ispir, “who aims to become Minister of Religious Affairs in the future” and the members of Lord’s Army [Oastea Domnului] “*who have found refuge here at Copăceni, where they preach their doctrine which is not allowed by law and by the socialist order.*” This “*illegal, ill-intentioned activity*,” states this letter signed by Ion Movileanu, “*has been conducted since a certain Evloghie Oța was installed as abbot of this skete.*”³⁶⁰

In November 1956 Evloghie Oța received an “Authorization” document with notarial authentication, by which Galaction Cordon delegated the abbot of Copăceni to travel across the entire territory of the Romanian People’s Republic, and visit the parishes pertaining to the Eastern Orthodox/Right-Worshipping (Old Calendarist) Romanian Church “*to perform all liturgical services and to be our canonical representative, based on the authorization granted to him. His Grace Evloghie Oța is our permanent delegate, entitled to travel to all our Church’s parishes in R.P.R (People’s Republic of Romania).*”³⁶¹. In this context it is worth mentioning a letter sent by Evloghie Oța to a certain Petrică Costache, of Isaccea town (9 March 1957) by which Oța announced he was willing to ordain priests,

³⁵⁹ These two Old Calendarist organizations functioned legally between 1946–1948, but after the Law on Religious Affairs was passed in 1948, they were no longer among the denominations recognized by the Romanian State. The Ministry of Religious Affairs no longer recognized any Old Calendarist faction, arguing that there were no dogmatic differences between them and the Romanian Orthodox Church. Actually, after August 1948, both Old Calendarist factions were operating illegally (Radu Mureșan, *Stilismul în România*, p. 71).

³⁶⁰ Letter signed Ion Movileanu, the Organization of the Traditionalist Christian Cult – Mircești, sent to the Ministry of Religious Affairs, f. 144–145, and applied the Ministry stamp “Strictly confidential”.

³⁶¹ Ministry of Religious Affairs, Directorate of Studies, file no. 74, vol. 1, 1956, f. 46.

both in Isaccea and the neighbouring villages and across Dobrudja, probably also for the old-rite (Lipovan) believers, “*so that you are not left behind in the darkness, and you may completely break any links with... and with the churches keeping the new calendar. In Bucharest there is a priest Andrei, an old man from Bessarabia, who speaks perfect Russian too, and has never celebrated the services according to the new calendar. If you want him, we have spoken to him about the town of Isaccea and he is willing to be a priest to serve there according to the old style [calendar].*”³⁶² Evloghie Oța requested an urgent answer about the situation in Isaccea and the villages around it, and was mainly interested in learning “*whether in every village we could find a peasant who had attended school for 7 years, or a church cantor, or simply a man who can read and write, who the people will designate to be their priest. If so we will immediately send a delegate there, to explain what has to be done.*”

One year later, Evloghie Oța was arrested and charged with “*subverting social order*” and sentenced to 10 years’ forced labour (of which he served 6 years and 4 months), and Copăceni Monastery was closed down. In 1964, after his release from prison, Evloghie Oța founded an Old Calendarist monastery in Bucharest (13, Televiziunii Street), dedicated to the feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos – “*Adormirea Maicii Domnului*”, today the headquarters of the Old Calendarist movement in Bucharest and Ilfov county, and residence of Flavian Bârgăoanu, “*vicar bishop of the Holy Synod of the Old Calendar Orthodox Church of Romania [Biserica Ortodoxă de Stil Vechi din România]*”.

Academic interest has been recently directed towards the Old Calendarist movement in Romania in general, and the biography of Evloghie Oța, in particular. I mention the studies of Ms Ana Șincan, researcher at “Gheorghe Șincai” Institute for Social Sciences and Humanities of the Romanian Academy in Târgu-Mureș and postdoctoral researcher of University College Cork in Ireland, currently participating in a postdoctoral research project of European Research Council Project Creative Agency and Religious Minorities: *Hidden Galleries in the Secret Police Archives in Central and Eastern Europe (Hidden Galleries)*; this project is funded by the *European Research Council* (ERC) under the EU research and innovation funding programme *Horizon 2020* (no. 677355).

Ms Șincan’s research project, *Viața după viață a corpului episcopului Evloghie Oța și disputata de proprietate asupra acestuia [The afterlife of Bishop Evloghie*

³⁶² Department of Religious Affairs, Directorate of Studies, file no. 74, 1957, f. 37–38.

Oța's dead body and its disputed ownership], comprising her contributions to conferences from 2018 onwards, a biographical portrait included in the database of *Hidden Galleries* project, as well as other articles, is based on the Archives of CNSAS (the National Council for the Study of the Secret Police/Securitate) – the prosecution and criminal case files on the Old Calendarist bishop Evloghie Oța. This project investigates the symbolism of the dead body of this former Old Calendarist bishop, buried in 1979 at “Adormirea Maicii Domnului [The Dormition of the Theotokos]” Monastery in Bucharest (said to have been disinterred by the Secret Police/Securitate and re-interred in an unknown place) as well as the dispute between the Old Calendarist community and the Romanian State, concerning ownership of the body of the respective Old Calendarist bishop. Looking forward to reading the book that publishes the results of this research work³⁶³, we note the recent efforts to bring to light materials and documents from the archives of this community at *Adormirea Maicii Domnului* Monastery and thus gain new insights into the past of this community³⁶⁴.

The historical aspect of “Evloghie Oța case” is not easy to understand either, because of the missing documents or missing parts in the available documents, that would enable one to connect the dots. It is equally difficult to assess the actual implications and impact of the *Hidden Galleries* project on the life of the Old Calendarist community. But clearly Evloghie Oța is presented in the communist authorities' documents as a *persona non grata*. One of the archive documents states that “*the fake bishop Evloghie Oța tends to break with the leaders of Slătioara and establish new Old Calendarist hubs in Wallachia and Dobruđa*”, while another document describes him as “*the greatest proponent of religious mysticism and most dangerous agitator among Old Calendarist leaders, as he spent much time in Greece, on Mount Athos*.”³⁶⁵

Regarding the relocation of Evloghie Oța's body, when “Adormirea Maicii Domnului [The Dormition of the Theotokos]” Monastery was demolished in 1983, this information had been already made public in 2005 by journalist Florin Bichir

³⁶³ Anca Șincan, “The Afterlife of Bishop Evloghie Oța's Dead Body and its Disputed Ownership” in Pamela Winfield and Mina Garcia (ed), *The Religious Body Imagined*, Equinox, 2021.

³⁶⁴ James Kapalo and Tatiana Vagramenko (ed), *Hidden Galleries. Material Religion in the Secret Police Archives in Central and Eastern Europe*, Lit Verlag, Zurich, 2020, especially Anca Maria Șincan, *Underground Monastery in Bucharest*, p. 18; Idem, *Bishop Evloghie and his Prayer Beads*, pp. 98–99.

³⁶⁵ Report of 3 June 1956, “Propuneri pentru instigatorii dușmănoși stiliști D.H, I.M și EO [Proposals regarding the hostile Old Calendarist instigators D.H, I.M and EO]”.

in *Evenimentul Zilei* newspaper, in an article stating that the monks of the aforementioned monastery claimed to have found the disinterred body of His Grace Evloghie incorrupt and giving out a pleasant scent: *“Sitting on his throne and wearing his resplendent vestments – according to the tradition of hierarchs’ burial – Bishop Evloghie appeared free from any decay! The monks fell on their knees, in awe before this miracle! The Securitate agents, after a moment’s stupefaction, took the bishop’s incorrupt body and threw it into another car! Then they drafted some sketchy minutes, where they hastily recorded the confiscation of “one human mummy” (!!!), and they disappeared into the night. The next day, bulldozers arrived and demolished everything: the cells, the refectory, the church. On the spot where the Monastery had been standing, in Militari neighbourhood (Apusului street), nothing else was built.”*³⁶⁶. After 1989, the place of worship was rebuilt following the petitions submitted by monks to the Police, the Prosecutor’s Office and the Romanian Intelligence Service (SRI) in order to retrieve the valuables confiscated by the police (the so-called Militia) and the Securitate (the secret police agency), and more importantly the body of the Old Calendarist bishop. In my opinion, these actions will probably serve, within the Old Calendarist circles, as arguments for the future canonization of the Old Calendarist bishop Evloghie Oța, and scholarly research will legitimize this effort.

Soon it will be a century since the painful split of 1924. There is hardly any communication between the members of the mainstream, “official Church”, and the members of the “Old Calendar Church”. During the interwar period, they were divided over the “spectre” of catholicism or communism. Nowadays, those “dangers” are in the historical past, but they have been replaced by the spectre of ecumenism, freemasonry, globalism, and the issue of the calendar has become a projection of their own phobias about the dangers threatening the “right worship”, the *form* in which they express their desire to be “different”.

After the events of 1989, the Old Calendarist believers decided to re-establish the Old Calendar Orthodox Church [Biserica Ortodoxă de Stil Vechi], and began by founding the “Organization of the Faithful of the Old Calendar Orthodox Church of Romania [Organizația Credincioșilor Bisericii Ortodoxe de

³⁶⁶ Florian Bichir, “*Securitatea a confiscat mumia unui episcop! [The Securitate confiscating a bishop’s mummy!]*”, article published in *Evenimentul Zilei*, 2005.

Stil Vechi din România]”, which in 2007 was declared a “religious association” titled The Religious Association “The Old Calendar Orthodox Church of Romania [Asociația Religioasă Biserica Ortodoxă de Stil Vechi din Romania]”, with the general headquarters at Slătioara Monastery³⁶⁷. In Wallachia, the Old Calendar Church is based at *Adormirea Maicii Domnului* [Dormition of the Theotokos] Monastery – the residence of the Old Calendarist “bishop” Flavian Bârgăoanu³⁶⁸. The priests and hierarchs of the Old Calendar Orthodox Church of Romania do not look different from the clergy of the Romanian Orthodox Church, as the priests have the same vestments; also, the Old Calendarist churches and monasteries are in no way different, either in their exterior appearance (architecture, painting), or in the form of their services and chants. However, the members of the Old Calendar Church of Romania regard the members of the mainstream Romanian Orthodox Church as schismatic, and do not accept common prayers or the celebration of the Holy Mysteries together with the Romanian Orthodox Church.

The Old Calendarist apologetic literature and official websites have launched diatribes against the Romanian Orthodox Church, termed “the official Church”. The main accusation against it is its “ecumenist” stance, but they also accuse the Romanian Orthodox Church of accommodating Catholicism or the Freemasonry. These ideas are shared by certain fundamentalist groups within the Romanian Orthodox Church. My study *Istoria Stilismului [Old Calendarism: A History]* mentioned the allegations made by the theologian Danion Vasile who at the time was not a member of the Old Calendar Church, but engaged in propaganda for the Old Calendarist movement, in his conferences and the articles he posted online. Later, in 2015, Danion Vasile announced on his personal blog that he had joined the Old Calendarist Church “to steer clear of the ecumenist heresy”. However he soon reached the conclusion that the Old Calendarist churches have serious canonical problems and he returned to the mainstream, official Romanian Orthodox Church.

³⁶⁷ Association “Biserica Ortodoxă de Stil Vechi din România [The Old Calendar Orthodox Church of Romania]”, http://culte.gov.ro/?page_id=59; For further information on the Religious Association “The Old Calendar Orthodox Church of Romania” [Asociația Religioasă Biserica Ortodoxă de Stil Vechi din România], see: Ministry of Culture and Religious Affairs, *Viața religioasă din România [Religious Life in Romania]*, TipogrupPress, Buzău, 2008, pp. 74–75; The State Secretariat for Religious Affairs, *Statul și cultele religioase [The State and the Religious Denominations]*, Litera Publishing House, Bucharest, 2014, p. 112.

³⁶⁸ Archives of the State Secretariat for Religious Affairs (Request for re-establishment dated 14.04.1993); Agreement in principle given by the State Secretariat for Religious Affairs no. 2682/ 13.05. 1993.

In the opinion of Danion Vasile, the problems one finds in the Old Calendar Church of Romania are the following: a) there are several Old Calendarist factions, in various jurisdictions, which denounce each other while each sees itself as the keeper of the Truth of the Church; b) canonical problems created by their separation from the Church and the manner in which their bishops have been ordained; c) doctrinal problems, especially generated by the fact that their doctrine is centered around resistance to ecumenism and other heresies, as well as the revision of the calendar, while other problems are ignored or tackled in a shallow manner³⁶⁹. The anti-ecumenist discourse gained new impetus in the aftermath of the Council of Crete (2016). The “Message of the Synod of the Old Calendar Orthodox Church of Romania before the opening of the ecumenist council of Crete”, posted online on 16/29 May 2016, states that the Council convened by the “official Churches” could not be termed either “Holy” or “Great”, because its form (number of participants) and essence (matters under discussion) did not meet the necessary criteria. Other postings declare that the texts issued by this Council introduce “*new, heretical views*”, while its documents have been drafted in a “*bureaucratic, ideologized, professional, cold and rigid*” language³⁷⁰.

It is my hope that the information added to that already presented in my 2012 study, based on additional research into archive documents or press articles, will offer better insights into the circumstances, perceptions, sensitivities and attitudes that resulted in the movement’s radicalization in the interwar period and in the fights with the police force, a few years later. All the actors involved contributed, one way or another, to the radicalization of the Old Calendarist movement: the lay or ecclesiastical authorities, by downplaying the seriousness of tensions, mismanaging incidents, passing on responsibility for solving the problems, from one institution to another; the politicians, by weaponizing the agitations over the matter of the calendar, taking advantage of them in the elections; the Old Calendarist adherents, by their fanaticism which they embraced due to poverty, the corruption of the administration, as well as the social, political and cultural marginalization in the Greater Romania.

³⁶⁹ <https://ortodox.md/danion-vasile-am-vrut-sa-trec-pe-stil-vechi-ca-o-forma-de-delimitare-de-erezia-ecumenista/>; <http://www.danionvasile.ro/blog/anunt/> (accessed on 5 August 2022).

³⁷⁰ <https://ro-ro.facebook.com/513746378639926/posts/mesajul-sinodului-bisericii-ortodoxe-de-stil-vechi-din-romania-inaintea-inceperii/1358635880817634/> (accessed on 5 August 2022).

Worth remembering that, in the autumn of 1924, shortly before the introduction of the calendar reform, a rebellion instigated by Bolsheviks broke out in Tatar-Bunar, a little town in Cetatea Albă county (southern Bessarabia, today's Ukraine), with 70% Russian and Ukrainian population. The rebellion aimed to at least destabilize the situation in Romania and to trigger a campaign of propaganda and disinformation; and as its best scenario, to stir the local population prompting it to remove the alleged "Romanian occupation in Bessarabia" and proclaim the Soviet Republic of Moldova.

In a discourse delivered before the Chamber of Deputies in 1925, Gheorghe Tătărescu, then subsecretary of state at the Ministry of Internal Affairs, presented his views on the stance to be adopted in relation to the situation in Bessarabia: "The situation in Bessarabia is very difficult and clearly the nefarious activity of the Soviets poses great obstacles to peace and order in Bessarabia. But precisely because the situation is so difficult, precisely because the agents of communist propaganda are so tenacious, it is necessary to heed the Bessarabian state of affairs. Since the schemers seek first and foremost to provoke the anger of the population and take advantage of it, it is the duty of conscious authorities to remove all causes for dissent. **Let us not carry out the defense of Bessarabia only on a military basis, but rather let us base it on the attachment of the population to the Romanian state. This is not hard to achieve, since most of the people are Moldovans [Bessarabians].** Abuse, all sorts of vexations, acts of injustice, all encourage and enable the schemers. The more honest, righteous, aware of its mission, is the administrative apparatus of a troubled province, the better it is able to provide protection against danger."³⁷¹

None of the expectations of Gheorghe Tătărescu came true in the interwar period, so that the Old Calendarist in 1935–1936 Bessarabia came to epitomize the failure of this province to integrate into the life of the young Romanian state that was Greater Romania of 1918.

I have also insisted on the significance of the year 1948, as another turning point in the history of Old Calendarism in Romania. History studies show that during the early years of the communist regime in Romania (1945–1948), until they achieved a firm and definitive grasp on power, communist authorities

³⁷¹ *Adevărul* of 11 December 1925. "Chestia Basarabiei în fața Camerei. Expunerea domnului Tătărescu [The Bessarabian matter presented in the Chamber. Mr Tătărescu's address]".

sought to demonstrate that they did not oppose religious freedom in Romania³⁷². Thus they made efforts to perpetuate not only the myth of the freedom enjoyed by the Romanian Orthodox Church, but also by those cults and denominations that had been persecuted during the interwar period or under the Antonescu regime, when a limited number of denominations were acknowledged, and religious associations or sects were abolished³⁷³. However this benevolent attitude, as historian George Enache pointed out, disguised a carefully planned strategy which through various and apparently unrelated actions, aimed to undermine the role of the Romanian Orthodox Church in society³⁷⁴. The need to accommodate the majority (dominant), mainstream Church and the other denominations was stringent, especially because in the upcoming elections of 1946, the communists were facing redoubtable adversaries: the social-democrats led by Titel Petrescu (1888–1957), who were working to promote socialist ideas in the Romanian society, which was traditionally right-leaning³⁷⁵.

Therefore, during the aforementioned period 1945–1948, the tenacious actions undertaken by the two Old Calendarist factions, aiming at official recognition, are not surprising. What is difficult to explain is the continuation of this policy after 1948, during the harshest times of the communist regime, when the two Old Calendarist factions actually operated illegally. The authorities of the communist state, through its various institutions and organizations (Government, ministries, etc) conducted an intense dialogue with the Old Calendarist movement, granting audiences to its delegates, and even allowed the Ministry of Religious Affairs to be sued by this movement's representatives. The ambiguous situation of Old Calendarists is summed up in an archive document dating from 1954, which noted: "Although this cult is illegal, Old Calendarists continue to operate unhindered (...) The Ministry of Religious Affairs has not clarified its position towards this cult, and as a result, Old Calendarists are neither forbidden like the

³⁷² Enache, George, *Ortodoxie și putere politică în România contemporană [Orthodoxy and political power in today's Romania]*, p. 542.

³⁷³ Decision of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Arts no. 42352 of 9 September 1940, published in Monitorul Oficial no. 216 of 17 September 1940, as well as Law no. 927, published in Monitorul Oficial no. 305 of 30 December 1942.

³⁷⁴ George Enache, *Orthodoxy, Liberalism and Totalitarianism in Modern and Contemporary Romania*, Cetatea de Scaun, 2006, p. 373.

³⁷⁵ Constantin Titel Petrescu (1888–1957) was a lawyer, president of the Romanian Social Democrat Party. He refused to collaborate with the Communist Party. He was arrested on 5 May 1948, detained in several prisons (including Sighet) and was released in 1955. He died shortly afterwards.

Jehova's Witnesses or the Adventist Reform movement, nor has their situation and statutes been approved."³⁷⁶

In the *Conclusions* to my study *Istoria stilismului [The Old Calendarist Movement: A History]*, published in 2012, I wrote: "A number of elements are insufficiently known and investigated, the most important one being the relationship between Old Calendarism and underground communism during the interwar period, respectively between Old Calendarism and the communist regime after 1944. The entire history of Old Calendarism, with the persecutions it was subject to during the interwar period and the tolerance it enjoyed during the communist times, respectively, can only be understood by regarding it through the lens of a «special rapport» with Moscow." I maintain this opinion, based on the sources I have examined again, for the present English-language edition. Thus in the interwar period, the Soviet authorities who pursued the dissolution of the Romanian state in its form established in 1918, attempted by various means to boost discontentment – of Old Calendarists among others. The benevolent attitude during the communist period can only be understood in the complex context which re-defined the rapports between the communist state and the official, having the largest membership, Orthodox Church.

The history of Old Calendarism is still unfolding. Recently, the Old Calendar Church of Romania underwent a major crisis, caused by the demoting and later defrocking (on 26 May 2022) of the metropolitan in office, Vlasie Mogârzan (b. 1941) and the enthronement of a new metropolitan – Demostene Ioniță (b. 1927). Critics reproached Metropolitan Vlasie for certain misdeeds that "generated unrest among the faithful", namely: the inadequate, discretionary way in which he led the Church; ethical problems; failure to participate in Church services during the pandemic; serving with defrocked priests; the fact that after he was removed from the rank of archbishop and metropolitan he turned to the lay authorities in order to retrieve his former position; "adopting heretical ideas and practices" (collaboration with clergy of ecumenist Churches "with whom we are not in communion"); his assertion that "the members of the Holy Synod are part of secret organizations, alien to the Church."³⁷⁷

In the spring of 2022, with the blessing of former metropolitan Vlasie Mogârzan, a new Old Calendarist faction emerged and was registered under the

³⁷⁶ Carmen Chivu, *Culte din România [Religious denominations in Romania]*, p. 136.

³⁷⁷ <https://stilvechi.ro/sites/default/files/hot%20sinodal%C4%83%20caterisire%20PS%20Vlasie.pdf> (accessed on 5 August 2022).

name of “Apărătorii Dreptei Credițe [Defenders of the True/ Right-Worshipping Faith].”³⁷⁸. The situation within the Old Calendarist Church is continuously evolving and any developments are possible in the future of Old Calendarism in Romania.

³⁷⁸ See the reaction of the Metropolis of Old Calendar Church (Slătioara Metropolis) “Lămuriri cu privire la Asociația “Apărătorii Dreptei Credițe [Clarifications on the Association Defenders of the True Faith]” (<https://www.manastireaslatioara.ro/stiri/lamuriri-despre-aparatorii-dreptei-credinte>)

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Chronological list

1923

Pan-Orthodox Conference of Constantinople (10 May-8 June 1923), led by the Ecumenical Patriarch Meletios IV (1921–1923), aiming to bring the calendar year and the astronomical year into accordance for a long span of time (calendar reform); The Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church decided, On November 13, 1923, to have the Julian calendar corrected by turning the date of October 1, 1924, into October 14, 1924.

1925

The Holy Synod had decided that the Easter of 1926 should be celebrated according to the revised calendar, on 4 April 1926;

Old Calendarist agitations gained visibility in the Old Kingdom and in Bessarabia during the celebration of the Christmas of 1925 and the New Year 1926.

1926

During the election campaign of 1926, Partidul Poporului [the People's Party] headed by General Alexandru Averescu had promised to re-instate the old calendar; Circular letter from the Minister of Internal Affairs, Octavian Goga, which announced that the government had decided to take no action against those Orthodox worshippers who wanted to celebrate Easter according to the old calendar (2 May 1926);

The first monastics of the Moldavian monasteries who rejected the revised calendar, left their monasteries and settled in isolated, remote locations in the mountains.

1927

The first actions taken by the Gendarmerie to placate the Old Calendarist agitators, and the intervention of authorities against some Old Calendar monks in the Mountains of Neamț, who were stirring the peasants in the nearby villages.

1928

The Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church had decided that the Easter of 1929 should be celebrated according to the revised calendar, on 31 March 1929, instead on 5 May 1929, according to the old calendar.

1929

The lay and ecclesiastically authorities they tacitly accepted that in Bessarabia Easter would be still celebrated according to the old calendar (on May 5). A bizarre situation was created, whereby members of the same autocephalous church celebrated Easter at different dates;

The Paschal celebrations generated further agitations among the Orthodox Christians in Moldavia and Bessarabia.

1930

By the Metropolitan Synod's decision no. 5754/ September 22 1930, eleven persons were definitively expelled from monasticism, among them David Bidașcu, Gamaliil Papil, and Glicherie Tănase;

The Old Calendarists organized themselves as legally founded charity associations, such as the Religious Association "The Holy Apostles Peter and Paul" of Zănești-Neamț Village.

1933

The Government adopted the *Law against new infringements of public order* – supplementary to Mârzescu Law.

1934

A "massive rebellion", as the Gendarmerie documents describe it, occurred in July 1934 in Toporăști-Vaslui, on the consecration of a prayer house.

1935

Albineț-Bălți in Bessarabia became a major Old Calendarist hub; most villagers had submitted requests to leave the Romanian Orthodox Church in order to join Old Calendarism;

During Eastertide, a well-known Old Calendarist agitator Nicolae Climovici, a Russian holding Romanian citizenship, arrived in Albineț Village and stirred several incidents in Bessarabia;

Glicherie Tănase arrived at Albineț and "consecrated" a church.

1936

The new Penal (Criminal) Code, known as "King Carol II Code", had already come into force in March 1936 and stipulated harsh penalties for acts of rebellion against the administrative sau judicial bodies or against public authorities;

On August 2, 1936 a great assembly of the Old Calendarists took place in Baia and Neamț counties, the ones where Glicherie had proclaimed himself as “bishop of the Old Calendarists in Moldavia”;

On September 20, 1936, a convoy of more than one hundred carts from Albineț crossed the Prut River and headed for Baia-Neamț. In the following days, the Old Calendarist caravan was stopped at Iași, where the Police and Gendarmerie arrested several persons;

Climovici was arrested only in early October 1936 and brought to Bucharest to be interrogated;

By the Decree of the Council of Ministers no. 2617/November 4 1936, the Government confiscated the Old Calendarist churches and prayer houses.

1937

Ministry of Religious Affairs and Arts, by the Ministry’s decision no. 4781/ April 21 1937, completely prohibited the activity of ten religious associations propagating ideas susceptible of leading to infringements of the state laws and affecting its institutions, with the Old Calendarist associations among them.

1940

Under the Antonescu regime (1940–1944), the “Old Calendarist” adherents were actually “united” or conflated with the Orthodox Church (Decision of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Arts no. 42352/September 9 1940).

1942

Law 927/ 1942 abolished all religious associations and sects while their assets, financial resources as well as their archives became State property.

1945

The first communist-led government led by Petru Groza (6 March 1945–30 November 1946).

1946

The “Traditionalist Christian Cult [Cultul Creștin Tradiționalist]”, headed by a layperson – Ion Movileanu, obtained an authorization to function (operating license) from the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Arts;

General elections (19 November 1946) which gave victory to Romanian Communist Party.

1947

The Ministry of Religious Affairs acknowledged another Old Calendarist group, named “The Religious Association of Eastern Traditionalist Christians [Asociația Religioasă a Creștinilor Tradiționaliști de Răsărit]” headquartered in Târgu Neamț and headed by Gheorghe Iacobaș and Gheorghe Moșneagu, with Glicherie Tănase as their spiritual director

1947

The beginning of construction of the Old Calendarist skete of Slătioara.

1948

The new Law of Religious Affairs (Law 177/August 4 1948) was voted, which formally guaranteed freedom of conscience and religious freedom of the territory of the Romanian People’s Republic;

None of the Old Calendarist movements was acknowledged by the Romanian State;

The Eastern Patriarchs convened for the Moscow Conference had decided that the clergy and faithful in every country should observe the calendar adopted by the Holy Synod of the respective Church, and celebrate Easter uniformly, according to the unrevised calendar.

1950

The two Old Calendarist factions attempted a merger, in order to initiate coordinated actions aimed to gain recognition from the State.

1954

On April 4, 1954, now-Monk Evloghie Oța alongside five monks of Râmeți Monastery (two priests and four rasophores) decided to adhere to Old Calendarism and sent a notification to the Romanian Orthodox Diocese of Alba Iulia and Sibiu;

The Metropolitan Consistory decided to have Evloghie Oța defrocked and excluded from monasticism, under charges of insubordination and disobedience to his legitimate superior, of schism and apostasy, and of involving other monks who had followed him;

The representatives of the two Old Calendarist factions discussed again the possibility of their union (June 1954); signing the *Cult’s Unification Document* and on October 7, 1954 by Ioan Movileanu, on behalf of the Traditionalist Christian Cult in Mircești and Dionisie Hugeanu, as a representative of the Right-worshipping Christians.

1955

On April 13, 1955, the Romanian Patriarchate received a *Notification* from the “Central Committee of the Old Calendar Organization [Consiliul Central al Organizației de Stil Vechi]”; the document declared that this Committee had convened for an extraordinary meeting on April 5, 1955 and offered the leading position to His Grace Bishop Galaction Galaction;

The Holy Synod decided to have the former bishop Galaction Gordun defrocked, with no right to appeal this decision (14 April 1955);

In the autumn of 1955, Galaction Cordun began petitioning Patriarch Justinian, asking for forgiveness and the annulment of his defrocking.

1956–1957

Galaction Cordun undertook a number of actions aimed at organizing the Old Calendarist movement (ordinations, regulations concerning several aspects of worship practices etc).

1958

Galaction Cordun petitioned Patriarch Justinian again, requesting the annulment of his defrocking.

The Holy Synod definitively rejected the request of former bishop Galaction Cordun to revoke his defrocking (12 December 1958), and maintained the decision of defrocking him issued in the meeting of April 14, 1955.

1959

Galaction Cordun passed away (21 July 1959)

The enforcement of decree no. 410/1959, obliging monastics to leave their monasteries (October 1959)

1990

Decision no. 1000/February 19 1990 of Suceava Court which gave legal personality to the “Organization of Members of the Old Calendar Orthodox Church of Romania [Organizația Credincioșilor Bisericii Ortodoxe de Stil Vechi din Romania]”.

2003

In 2003, the “Organization of Members of the Old Calendar Orthodox Church of Romania” changed its name to “The Old Calendar Orthodox Church of Romania [Biserica Ortodoxă de Stil Vechi din România]” by the Decision of Fălticeni Court, file no. 748/March 5, 2003.

2007

In 2007, the “Old Calendar Orthodox Church” with the general headquarters at Slătioara Monastery submitted to the Ministry of Religious Affairs an impressive number of documents with a view to obtaining recognition as a religious denomination, and to acquire the status of Religious Association.

2022

Defrocking (on 26 May 2022) of the metropolitan in office, Vlasie Mogârzan (b. 1941) and the enthronement of a new metropolitan – Demostene Ioniță (b. 1927).

With the blessing of former metropolitan Vlasie Mogârzan, a new Old Calendarist faction emerged and was registered under the name of “Apărătorii Dreptei Credințe [Defenders of the True/ Right-Worshipping Faith].

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Appendices

APPENDIX 1. Titles used by Old Calendarist religious organizations throughout the different eras

- The Religious Association of Eastern Traditionalist Christians [Asociația Religioasă a Creștinilor Tradiționaliști de Răsărit] headquartered in Târgu Neamț
- Eastern Traditional Right-Worshipping Christians [Creștinii pravoslavnici tradiționali de răsărit]
- Religious Association of the Eastern Traditional Right-Worshipping Christians [Asociația religioasă a Creștinilor Pravoslavnici Tradiționali de Răsărit]
- The Right-Worshipping Church [Biserica pravoslavnică]
- The Right-Worshipping Christian [Creștinii pravoslavnici]
- The Right-Worshipping Cult from the Popular Republic of Romania [Cultul pravoslavnic din RPR]
- The Cult of Right-Worshipping Christians [Cultul creștinilor pravoslavnici]
- The Organization of Traditionalist Christian Cult [Organizația cultului creștin tradiționalist] headquartered in Mircești, Focșani County
- The Traditionalist Christians of the Right-Worshipping Christians [Creștinii tradiționaliști-Biserica pravoslavnică]
- The Religious Association of the Traditionalist Christians [Asociația religioasă a creștinilor tradiționaliști]
- The Christian Traditionalist Association (Asociația creștină tradițională)
- The Headquarters of the Organization of the Christian Traditionalist Cult [Centrala organizației cultului creștin tradiționalist]
- The Organization “Christian Traditionalist Cult” [Organizația “Cultului creștin tradiționalist”]
- The Christian Traditionalist Church of Romania [Biserica creștină tradiționalistă din România]
- The Traditionalist Church – “The Central Organization of the Christian Traditionalist Cult from the Popular Republic of Romania” [Biserica tradiționalistă – “Organizația centrală a cultului creștin tradiționalist din RPR”]
- The Organization of the Christian Traditionalist Cult of the Catholic Church of Romania [Organizația cultului creștin tradiționalist al bisericii sobornicești din România]
- The Old Calendarist Orthodox Christian of the Popular Republic of Romania [Creștinii ortodocși de stil vechi din RPR]

- Old Calendarist Orthodox Christian grouping of the Popular Republic of Romania [Gruparea creștinilor ortodocși stil vechi din RPR]
- The Orthodox Old Calendarist Cult [Cultul Ortodox de stil vechi]
- The Old Rite Right-Worshipper Church [Biserica drept slăvitoare de stil vechi]
- The Old Rite Right-Worshippers [Credincioșii dreptslăvitori de stil vechi]
- The Old Calendarist Eastern Right-Worshipper Christians [Creștinii pravoslavnici de răsărit de stil vechi]
- The Cult of the Old Rite Orthodox Church [Cultul bisericii ortodoxe de rit vechi]
- The Eastern Traditionalist Right-Worshipping Church [Biserica pravoslavnică tradițională de răsărit]

APPENDIX 2. The new calendar for October, November and December 1924, revised by the Holy Synod of the Autocephalous Romanian Orthodox Church

448

BISERICA ORTODOXA ROMANA

NOUL CALENDAR ORTODOX

pe

OCTOMBRE, NOEMBRÉ ȘI DECEMBRE 1924

Îndreptat de Sfântul Sinod al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române-Autocefale

OCTOMBRE

Are 31 zile

M 1	Acop. Maicii D-lui. Sf. Ap. Anania
J 2	Chiprian și Iustina
V 3	Dionisie Areop.
S 4	Sf. Mucen. Ierotei al Atenei
D 5	Sf. Muceniță Haritina

Duminică 20 după Rusalii. Glas 1, Voscr. 7, Gal. I, 11–19. Luc. VII, 11–16.

L 6	Sf. Apostol Toma
M 7	Sf. Mare Mucen. Serghie și Vakh
V 8	Sf. Cuvioasă Pelaghia
S 9	Sf. Apost. Iacov al lui Alfeu
V 10	Sf. Mucen. Evlampie și Evlampia
S 11	Sf. Ap. Filip, unul din cei 7 Diaconi
D 12	Sf. ții M. Prov. Tarah și Andronic

Duminică 21 după Rusalii și a Sf. Părinți dela Sinod VII Mucenic. Glas 2, Voscr. 8, Gal. II, 16–20. Evr. XIII, 7–12. Lc. VII, 5–15, 8. Io. XVII, 1–13.

L 13 Sf. ții Mucenici Carp și Papii

M 14	Sf. ții Cuv. Cosma și Parascheua
M 15	Sf. M. Luchian preot. Aniv. Încoronării
J 16	Sf. Longhin. Neg. A. S. R. Prinț. Carol
V 17	Sf. Pro. Osie și M. Andrei Criteanul
S 18	Sf. Apost. și Evanghelist Luca
D 19	Sf. Prooroc Ioil

Duminică 23 după Rusalii. Glas 3, Voscr. 9, Efes. II, 4–10. Lc. VIII, 26–39.

20	Sf. Mare Mucenic Artemie
M 21	Sf. Cuv. Ilarion cel Mare
M 22	Sf. Averchie episcopul
J 23	Sf. Mc. și Ap. Iacov al Ierus.
V 24	Sf. Marele Mucenic Areta
S 25	Sf. ții Mucen. Marchian și Martirie
D 26	Sf. Marele Mucenic Dimitrie

Duminică 24 după Rusalii. Glas 4, Voscr. 10, Efes. II, 14–22. Gal. V, 22–VI, 1–2. Lc. VIII, 41–56. Mt. XI, 27–30.

L 27	Sf. Nestor și Dimitrie cel nou
M 28	Sf. Mucen. Terentie și Neonila
M 29	Sf. M. Anastasia. Nașterea M. S. Reșnei
J 30	Sf. ții Mucen. Zinovie și Zinovia
V 31	Sf. Ap. Stahie, Narchis și alții

NOTE: 1) După 30 Septembrie stil vechi (Sf. Mucenic Grigorie al Armeniei) se trece la 14 Octombrie (Sf. ții Cuv. Cosma și Parascheua).

2) Zilele 1–13 Octombrie stil vechi se amintire Acoperirea Maicii Domnului, Sf. Ap. Anania și următorii până la Sf. ții Mucenici Carp și Papii se va face în 14 Octombrie împreună cu pomenirea Sf. ții Cuvios Cosma și Parascheua.

3) Tot în 14 Octombrie se vor citi Evangheliile 20 și 21 de după Rusalii, rămase afară, în urma îndreptării calendarului.

4) Pentru fixarea zilei de Paște se susține, pascalia Bisericii Ortodoxe de până acum, având data a se transforma în conformitate cu calendarul Iulian îndreptat. Astfel în anul 1925, pentru Postul Sf. lor Paște, lăsatul de carne va fi la 22 Februarie, lăsatul de brânză la 1 Martie, ziua de Paște la 19 Aprilie, înălțarea Domnului 1 28 Maiu și Coborârea Sf. tului Duh la 7 Iunie. Toate sărbătorile cu date fixe în anul 1925 și următorii, rămă neschimbate la zilele lor de până acum, și toate orânduiriile bisericești se susțin nealterate.

NOEMBRÉ

Are 30 zile

S 1	Sf. Cosma și Damian (Asia)
D 2	Sf. Mucenic Achindin

Duminică 22 după Rusalii. Glas 5, Voscr. 11, Gal. VI, 11–18. Lc. XVI, 19–31.

L 3	Sf. Mucenic Acheptima
M 4	Sf. Ioanichie cel Mare și Nicandru
M 5	Sf. Mc. Galaction și Epistimia
J 6	Sf. Pavel Mărturisitorul
V 7	Sf. 33 Mucenici și Sf. Cuv. Lazăr
S 8	Sf. Sobor. Sf. Arh. Mih. și Gavril
D 9	Sf. ții Mucen. Onisifor și Porfirie

Duminică 25 după Rusalii. Glas 6, Voscr. 1, Efes. IV, 1–7. Lc. X, 25–37.

L 10	Sf. Ap. Erast și Sf. M. Orest
M 11	Sf. M. M. Mina; Victor și Vichentie
M 12	Sf. Ion cel milostiv și Nil
J 13	Sf. Ioan Gurădeaur
V 14	Sf. Apostol Filip
S 15	Sf. Gurie. Incep. Post. Crăc.
D 16	Sf. Apost. și Evanghelist Matei

Duminică 26 după Rusalii. Glas 7, Voscr. 2, Efes. V, 9–19. Lc. XII, 16–21, VIII, 8.

L 17	Sf. Grigorie al Neochesariei
M 18	Sf. Platon și Roman
M 19	Sf. Proor. Avdie, Sf. M. Varlaam
J 20	Sf. Grigorie dela Bistrița și Proclu
V 21	(+) Intrarea în Bis. Dezleg. la pește
S 22	Sf. Apostol Filimon
D 23	Sf. Amfilohie al Iconiului

Duminică 30 după Rusalii. Glas 8, Voscr. 3, Colos. III, 12–16. Filip. III, 20–IV, 1–3. Lc. XVIII, 18–27. Mat. V, 14–19.

L 24	Sf. Mucenic Climent al Romei
M 25	Sf. Mare Muceniță Ecaterina
M 26	Sf. Alipie Stălpnicul și Stelian
J 27	Sf. Mare Mucen. Iacov Persul
V 28	Sf. Mucenic Ștefan cel nou
S 29	Sf. Mucen. Paramon și Filomen
D 30	Sf. Ap. Andrei cel întâi chemat

Duminică 31 după Rusalii. Glas 1, Voscr. 4, I Tim. I, 15–17. Lc. XVIII, 35–43.

DECEMBRE

Are 31 zile

L 1	Sf. Prooroc Naum
M 2	Sf. Prooroc Avacum
M 3	Sf. Prooroc Sofonie
J 4	Sf. Varvara și Ioan Damaschin
V 5	Sf. Sava cel sfânt
S 6	Sf. Ierarh Nicolae
D 7	Sf. Amvrosie și Filotea

Duminică 27 după Rusalii. Glas 2, Voscr. 5, Efes. VI, 10–17. Luc. XIII, 10–17.

L 8	Sf. Cuvios Patapie
M 9	Zemislire P. Sf. Fecioare Maria
M 10	S-ții M. Mina, Ermoghen și Evgraf
J 11	Sf. Daniil Stălpnicul
V 12	Sf. Spiridon al Trimitundei
S 13	Sf. ții Muc. Evstratie și Lucia
D 14	Sf. Mucenic Thirs.

Duminică 28 după Rusalii și a Sf. Strămoși. Glas 3, Voscr. 6, Col. III, 4–11. Lc. XIV, 16–24. Mt. XX, 16.

L 15	Sf. Mucenic Eleverie episcopul
M 16	Sf. Prooroc Agheu
M 17	Sf. Prooroc Daniil și cei 3 tineri
J 18	Sf. Mucenic Sevastian
V 19	Sf. Mucenic Vonifatie
S 20	Sf. Mucenic Ignatie al Antiohiei
D 21	Sf. Muc. Iuliana și Sf. Temistocle

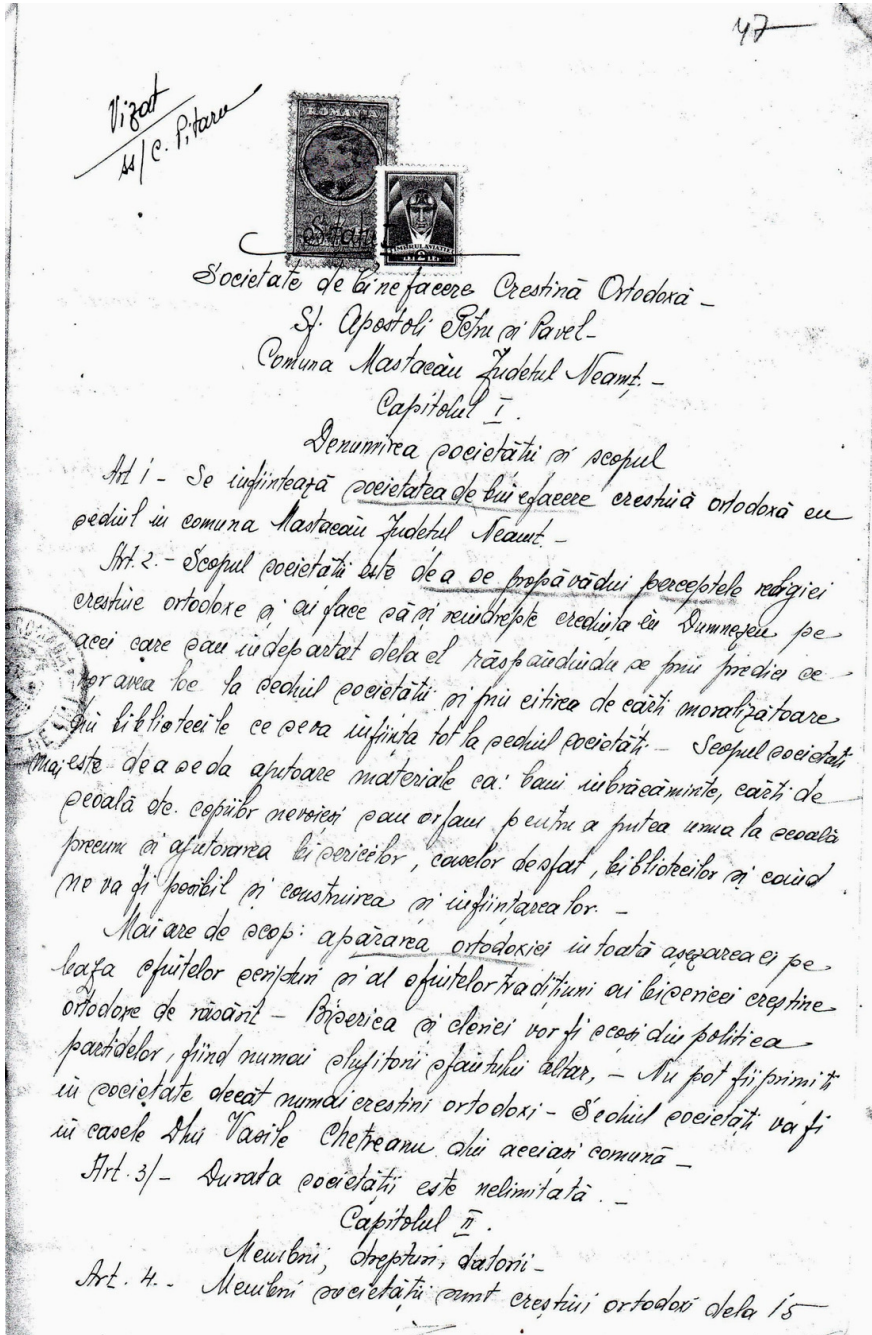
Duminică înaintea Nașterii Domnului: a Sf. Părinți. Glas 4, Voscr. 7, Evr. XI, 9–10, 32–40. Mt. I, 1–24.

L 22	Sf. Marele Muceniță Anastasia
M 23	Sf. 10 Mucenici din Creta
M 24	Sf. Muceniță Evghenia fecioara
J 25	(+) Nașterea Domnului. H.
V 26	Sf. Sobor. Maicii D-lui, Sf. Nicodim
S 27	Sf. Ap. și Arhidiacon Ștefan. H.
D 28	Sf. 20.000 de Mucenici

Duminică după Nașterea Domnului. Glas 5, Voscr. 8, Gal. I, 11–19. Mat. II, 13–23.

L 29	Sf. 14.000 de Prunci Mucenici
M 30	Sf. Muceniță Anisia
M 31	Sf. Cuvioasă Melania romana

**APPENDIX 3. "The Orthodox Charitable Society Sts Peter and Paul
[Societatea de Binefacere Creștină Ortodoxă Sf. Petru și Pavel]",
1936 (excerpt from the Statutes)**



APPENDIX 4. Minutes signed by the Orthodox believers of Popești Village, Soroca County, notifying of their decision to join the Old Calendar Church

430

Proces- Verbal.

Astăzi (30) treizeci Ianuarie Anul (1936) Una mie nouă sute treizeci și șase.

Noi subsemnații locuitori creștini ortodocși din satul Popești de sus jud. Soroca care facem parte din Biserica de răsărit din acest sat.

Întâlnindu-ne la casa locuitorului Ion Șafercea am decis prezentul proces-verbal considerându-ne ca esți din cultul Bisericii ortodoxe naționale calendarul oficial stil nou și că voim a rămâne urmaș și moștenitori al cultului Bisericii creștine ortodoxe de răsărit stil vechi oficiându-ne credința noastră strămoșască după așezământul celor (318) trei sute optzeci și șapte sfinți părinți făcători de minuni și al sfinților soboară Egumenice din soborul dela Nichea și canoanelor Apostolice a Bisericii creștine ortodoxe de răsărit și de a ne aduce preot după hotărârea noastră.

Drept care am decis prezentul Proces-Verbal în trei exemplare spre cele necesare drept pentru care semnăm

Președinte C. Popăila Secretar *[Signature]*
 Vice președinte Nălbănețu
 Membrii Necomuni
 Căpitan Șafercea Popăila Catana Șafercea
 Blănișcă Șafercea Șafercea
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APPENDIX 5. The Ministry of Culture and Arts acknowledges the “Traditionalist Christian Cult [Cultul Creștin Tradiționalist]” headquartered at Mircești-Putna, 1936

MINISTERUL CULTELOR ~~MINISTERUL CULTURII~~
DIRECȚIUNEA CULTELOR MINORITARE.

Adresa poștală:
Str. General Barthelemy Nr. 28, B. II

Telefon: 4.39.00

Societății Cultului Creștin Tradiționalist
Comuna Mircești, jud. Putna.

38955/1945.

3.VIII.1945

Boșorul și Nr. dv. Data dv. Dosarul și Nr. nostru (a se repeta în răspuns) Data

Priveste:

Ca urmare la cererea Dos. Nr. 10/ din 31 Iulie 1945, prin care solicitați Ministerului autorizația de a putea practica liber credințele Dos. religioase, avem onoare a vă face cunoscut că Ministerul Cultelor vă aprobă cererea.

În consecință cultul creștin tradiționalist pe care îl practicați liber de toate interdicțiile săi fără ca autoritățile polițienesci să interfereze cu activitatea de cult: înmormântarea, botezul, cununta precum și toate slujbele liturgice.

Rămâne însă înțeles că societatea cultului creștin tradiționalist va observa în actele publice precum și în tot cealaltă are legătură cu Statul calendarul oficial civil al țării.

Prezenta servește pentru a face dovadă în fața autorităților că Ministerul lasă libertatea de manifestare a societății cultului creștin tradiționalist.

ROMANIA
Ministerul Cultelor
DIRECȚIUNEA CULTELOR

DIRECTOR,
Kere

APPENDIX 6. “Traditionalist” Old Calendarist parishes in 1950

<u>Parohiile creștine tradiționaliste</u>	
1. <u>Mircești-Putna</u>	având 12 familii, cu paraclis într'o cameră.
2. <u>Câmpuri-Putna</u>	având 80 familii, cu paraclis într'o cameră.
3. <u>Răcoasa-Putna</u>	având 75 familii, cu paraclis într'o cameră.
4. <u>Novilău-Putna</u>	având 20 familii, cu biserică construită în anul 1946.
5. <u>Păunești-Putna</u>	având 100 familii, cu biserică construită în anul 1946.
6. <u>Mărăști-Putna</u>	având 73 familii, cu paraclis într'o casă. Paroh, preotul Ioachim Perju.
7. <u>Umbrești-Tecuci</u>	având 60 familii, cu biserică construită în anul 1949. Sunt două călugărițe cântărețe.
8. <u>Furceni-Tecuci</u>	având 80 familii, cu un paraclis în formă de biserică, construit în anul 1933. Aici sunt 1 călugăr și 2 ucenici, îndeplinesc serviciul de cântăreți.
9. <u>Liești-Tecuci</u>	având 100 familii, cu paraclis în formă de biserică, construit în anul 1933. Aici sunt 3 călugărițe, care îndeplinesc serviciul de cântăreți.
10. <u>Poduri jud. Bacău</u>	având 100 familii cu paraclis într'o casă, amenajat din anul 1946. Aici sunt 3 călugărițe care îndeplinesc serviciul de cântăreți.
11. <u>Asău-Bacău</u>	având 80 familii, cu paraclis într'o casă, amenajat în anul 1947.
13. <u>Murgești-Floreni -Tutoaia</u>	având 40 familii cu paraclis într'o casă, amenajat în anul 1947.
14. <u>Tâmboești-R-Sărat</u>	având 14 familii, cu paraclis amenajat într'o casă din anul 1947.
15. <u>Slobozia-Ciorăști R-Sărat</u>	având 12 familii și paraclis amenajat într'o casă.
16. <u>Bisoca-R-Sărat</u>	având 25 familii și paraclis amenajat într'o casă.
17. <u>Codreni-Copăcenii-Ilfov</u>	având 107 familii cu biserică construită în anul 1945. Paroh, preotul Martinian Comănci.
18. <u>Forăști-Bacău</u>	având 40 familii, paraclis și biserică în construcție. Paroh, preotul Gamaliel Papil.
In total sunt 18 parohii alcătuite din mai multe sate, păstori- te de către cei 4 preoți menționați în acest tablou.	
Inspector ghidat	
decembrie 1950	

Schituri și mănăstiri pravoslavnice, tradiționaliste.

29

- Schitul de călugări Slătioara, comuna Râșca, raionul Fălțiceni, cu biserică și 40 călugări și frați, stareț, preot: Glicherie Tănase. 9 dintre acești călugări se găsesc repartizați ca preoți parohi în diferite sate.
- Schitul de călugărițe dela Brădătel, com. Rotopânești, raionul Fălțiceni, cu biserică în construcție și 8 călugărițe și surori. Stareță Camelia Teodoru.
- Mănăstirea de Maici dela Brădătel, com. Grumizești-Neamț, cu paraclis și 34 călugărițe și surori. Stareță Macaria Samoilă.
- Locul de maici dela Dobru, com. Vânători - Neamț, în construcție. are 12 maici și surori. Stareță Serafima Stănoaia.

Schituri și mănăstiri tradiționaliste.

- Schitul de maici dela Secături comuna Găgești, jud. Putna. Biserică în construcție. Sunt 14 călugărițe și surori având ca stareță pe Magdalena Similea.
- Schitul de maici dela Tepeu-Tecuci, cu 20 maici.
- Mănăstirea de călugări dela Copăcenți - Ilfov, cu 7 călugări și biserică în construcție.
- Mănăstirea de călugări dela Furtăcenți-Tecuci, cu 4 călugări.

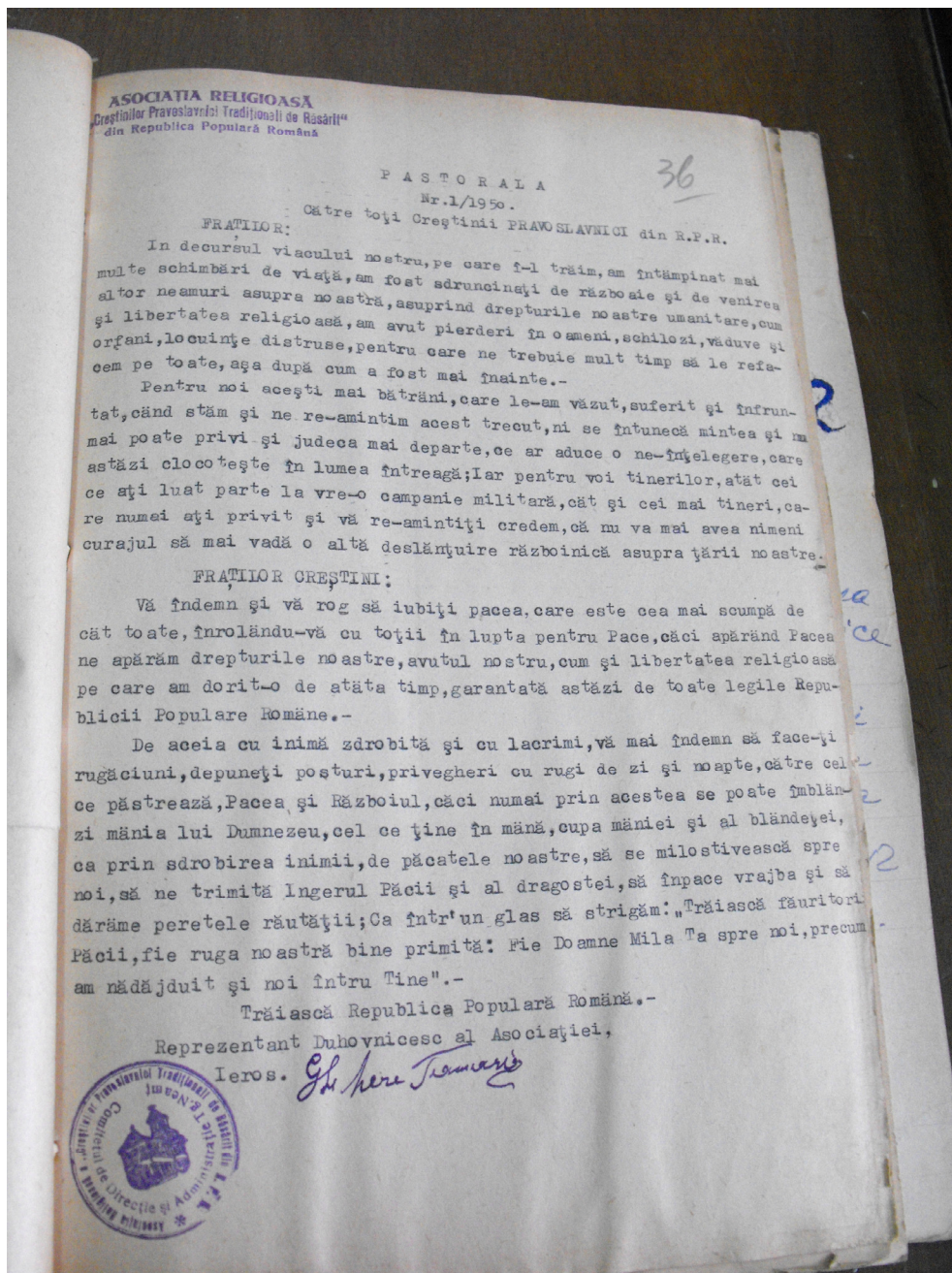
APPENDIX 7. “Right-Worshipping [pravoslavnic]” Old Calendarist parishes in 1950

Parohiile creștine pravoslavnice	
<u>Văntori-Neamț</u>	alcătuită din satele Văntori, Tg-Neamț, Filioara, și Grumăzești având 210 credincioși. Au biserică în construcție.
<u>Răucești-Neamț</u>	alcătuită din satul Răucești cu 210 credincioși. Au case de rugăciuni în construcție.
<u>Urecheni-Neamț</u>	alcătuită din satele Urecheni, Păstrăveni, Petricani, Fimișești - Baia, Muncelul de Sus - Baia și Tupilați-Roman cu 216 credincioși, având un paracelis și biserică în construcție.
<u>Bodești-Neamț</u>	alcătuită din satul Bodești, cu 90 de credincioși, având un paracelis.
<u>Zănești-Neamț</u>	alcătuită din satele Zănești, Podoleni, Căndești, Săveniștii, Buhuși, Borlești, Roznov, - Neamț și Gărleni - Itești - Bacău cu 492 credincioși și biserică în construcție. Paroh pr. Nil Grip.
<u>Buhalnița-Neamț</u>	alcătuită din satele Buhalnița, Hangu-Neamț, Borna, Șarul Dornei, Neagra Șarului, Câmpulung, cu 148 credincioși, având paracelis, iar paroh este preotul Veniamin Mihăilescu.
<u>Călugăreni</u>	alcătuită din satele Călugăreni, Bistricioara, și Ceahlău - Neamț cu 57 credincioși și biserică în construcție.
<u>Rădășeni-Baia</u>	alcătuită din satele Rădășeni, Lămășeni, Bunești, Cornul Luncii - Baia, Boșanci - Suceava, Coșula și Fântânele - Botoșani cu 268 credincioși și biserică în construcție. Paroh pr. Ghedeon Dedenco.
<u>Fântâna Mare-Baia</u>	alcătuită din satele Fântâna Mare, Baia - Baia cu 365 credincioși, având casă de rugăciuni și biserică în construcție.
<u>Brădătești-Baia</u>	alcătuită din satele Rotopănești și Horodniceni - Baia cu 206 credincioși având Schit de maici și biserică în construcție.
<u>Râșca-Baia</u>	alcătuită din satul Râșca - Baia cu 297 credincioși, având biserică în construcție.
<u>Drăcenii-Baia</u>	alcătuită din satele Drăcenii, Mălini, Sasca-Baia, Brăești și Băișești - Suceava, cu 229 credincioși având casă de rugăciuni.
<u>Bogdănești-Baia</u>	alcătuită din satul Bogdănești-Baia cu 238 de credincioși, având biserică în construcție. Preot paroh Teofan Herța.
<u>Târna-Mare-Baia</u>	alcătuită din satele Hârtop, Liteni, Preuțești, Pleșești, orașele Fălticeni și Pașcani cu 200 credincioși, având biserică în construcție.
<u>Săcuța-Boroaia-Baia</u>	alcătuită din satul Boroaia - Baia cu 107 credincioși, având biserică în construcție.
<u>Nemțeni-Baia</u>	alcătuită din satul Nemțeni-Baia cu 93 de credincioși, având biserică în construcție.
<u>Drăgușeni-Baia</u>	alcătuită din satele Drăgușeni, Drăgănești, Moțca, Lespezi, Cristești - Baia cu 267 credincioși având paracelis și biserică în construcție. Paroh pr. Bonifatie Mîntaru.

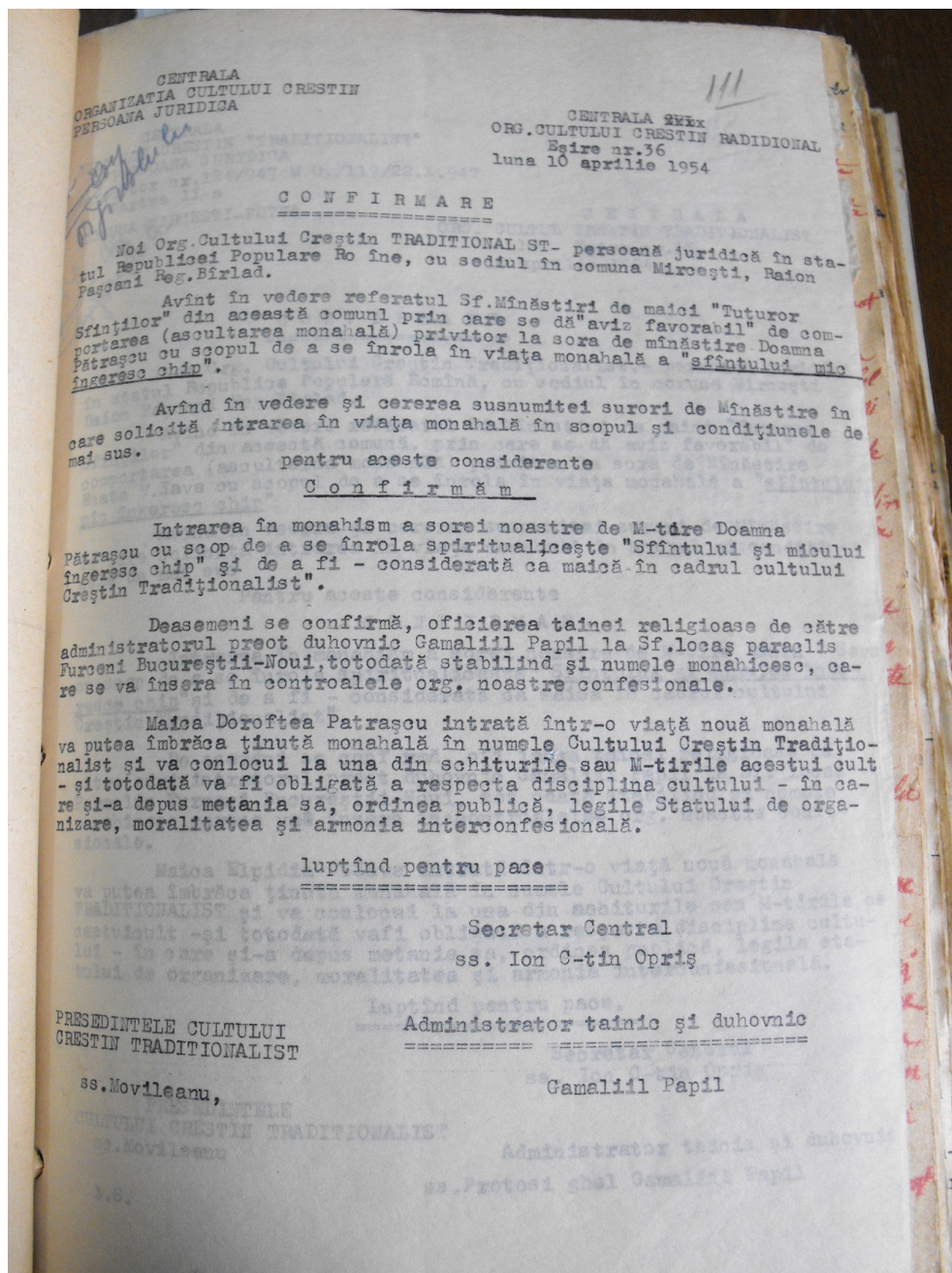
- 8 -
- 27
3. - Ciumulești-Baia alcătuită din satul Ciumulești-Baia cu 69 de credincioși, având casă de rugăciune.
7. - Brusturi-Baia alcătuită din satul Brusturi-Baia cu 267 credincioși, având biserică în construcție. Călugărul Damaschin Chiribuiță.
8. - Asău-Bacău alcătuită din satul Asău-Bacău, cu 40 credincioși, având casă de rugăciune.
1. - Odobești-Bacău alcătuită din satele Odobești-Bacău, Ciuturști-Chiou Stoica, Păucești, Pântănele, Obârșia-Roman, cu 155 credincioși având biserică în construcție. Paroh, preotul Nifon Ianculescu.
2. - Urșita-Mironeasa-Iași alcătuită din satele Mironeasa, Buctum și Belcești-Iași, cu 86 credincioși, având casă de rugăciune.
4. - Bals-Băiceni-Iași alcătuită din satele Băiceni, Coțnari, Cârjoaia, Războeni, Tg-Frumos, Pântănele, Tușora, Lunca, Andreșeni, Tigănași, Coarnele caprui, -Iași, Stroiești, Cosțești, Ruginoasa, Hărmanești, Tătăruși și Sirefel-Baia, cu 251 credincioși și biserică în construcție.
1. - Tansa-Vaslui alcătuită din satele Tansa, Munteni, Kăfăila, Vaslui, Negrești, Tîbănești, -Vaslui, Lagăța, Boghicea, Stănița-Roman, cu 183 credincioși având un paraclet.
1. - Rediu-Neamț alcătuită din satul Rediu-Neamț cu 58 credincioși având biserică în construcție.
1. - Păunești-Putna alcătuită din satele Păunești și Copăcești-Putna, cu 301 credincioși, având biserică în construcție.
1. - Covasna-Trei Scaune alcătuită din satul Covasna-Trei Scaune, cu 46 credincioși,
1. - Slătioara-Baia alcătuită din satul Slătioara, unde au schit de călugări și biserică. Paroh este preotul Glicherie Tănase, șeful spiritual al cultului.

În total sunt 27 parohii deservite de cei 7 preoți menționați mai sus și de alți călugări ce sunt trimiși de la schitul Slătioara-Baia. Numărul credincioșilor care și-au făcut legal formele de trecere la acest cult este de 5235, răspândiți prin satele arătate.

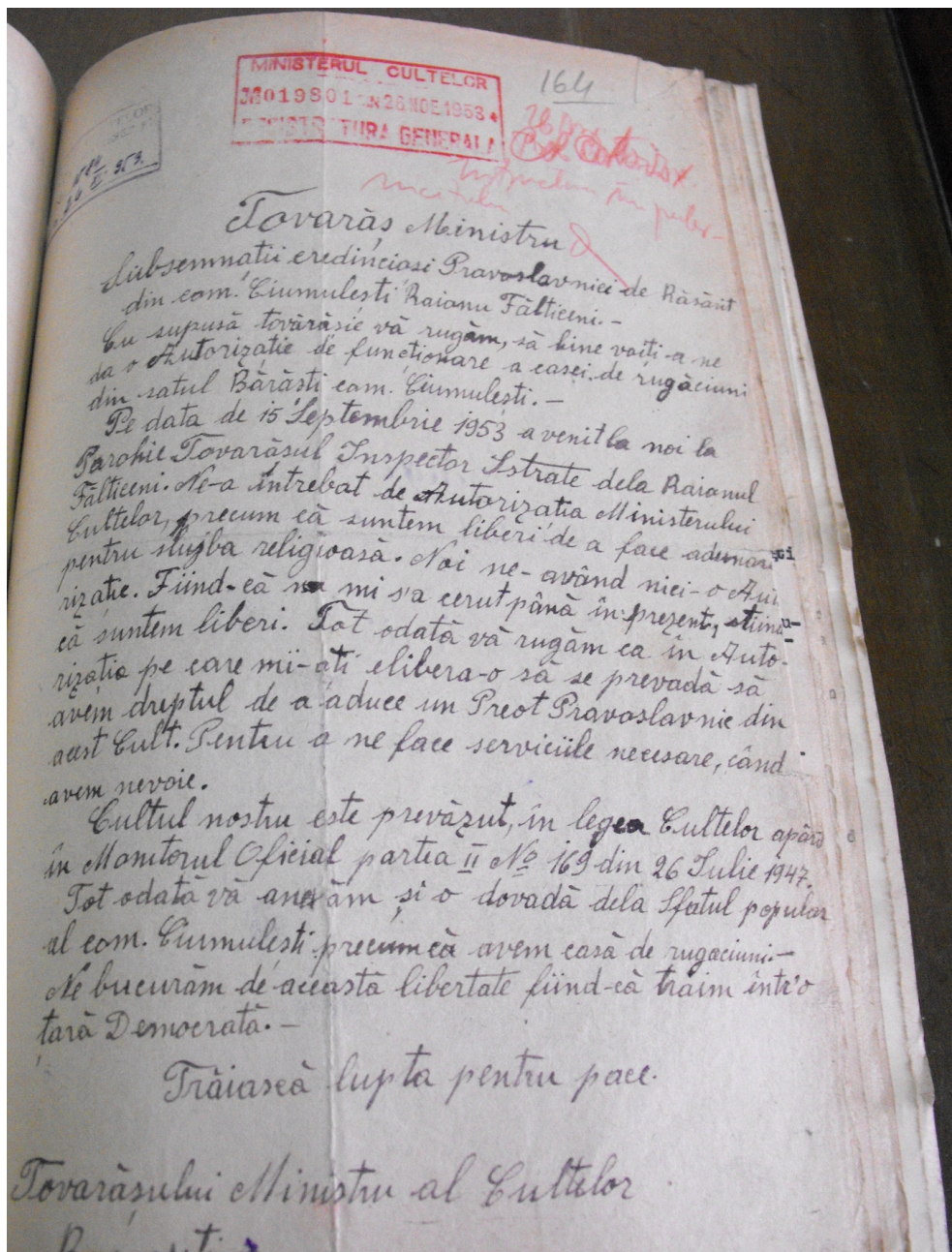
**APPENDIX 8. Pastoral letter addressed by Glicherie Tănase
„To all right-worshipping Christians [Către toți creștinii pravoslavnici]”
in the Romanian Popular Republic (RPR) (1950)**



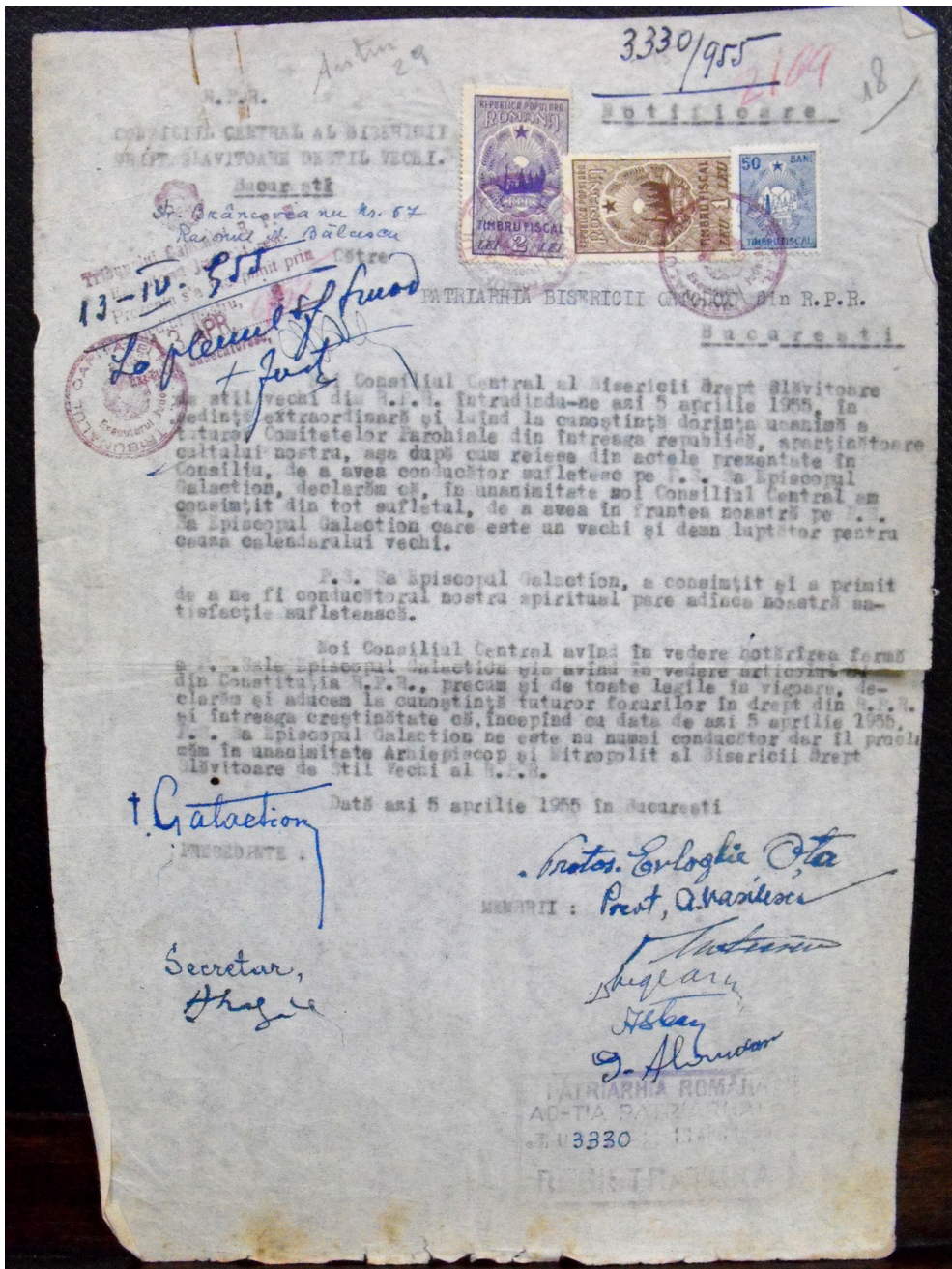
APPENDIX 9. The Traditionalist Christian Cult [Cultul Creștin Tradiționalist]. Confirmation of admittance into monasticism (1954)



APPENDIX 10. Memorandum of the Old Calendarist believers of Ciumulești-Fălticeni requesting the authorization of their place of worship



APPENDIX 11. The “Central Council of the Old Calendar Right-Worshipping [Orthodox] Church in RPR” notifies the Patriarchate about Galaction Cordun (1955)



**APPENDIX 12. Grammaton of ordination
as deacon and priest, signed by Galaction Cordon (1955)**



**APPENDIX 13. Holograph letter addressed
by Galaction Cordun to Patriarch Justinian (September 8, 1955)**

12. IX. 955
L. Sf. Sinod

Sanctitatea Voastră,

Subsemnatul Galaction, smerit monah
aflător în momentul de față în Sf. M^{re} Cer-
nica, bătrân și bolnav, muștrat fără încetare
și noapte de gresală ce am făcut-o alil im-
potrivă Sf. Sinod cîl și a arhieriei mele, vă-
zînd pe deoparte că multe zile nu mai c
de trăit, așa suferind cum mă găsesc, - iar
de alta, spre a nu fi sarcină Sf. M^{re} și Prea Cuv. Sta-
rel, care acum se găsesc în mare strămătorare și
tinuți să mă întrețină și pe mine și să mă a-
dăpostească.

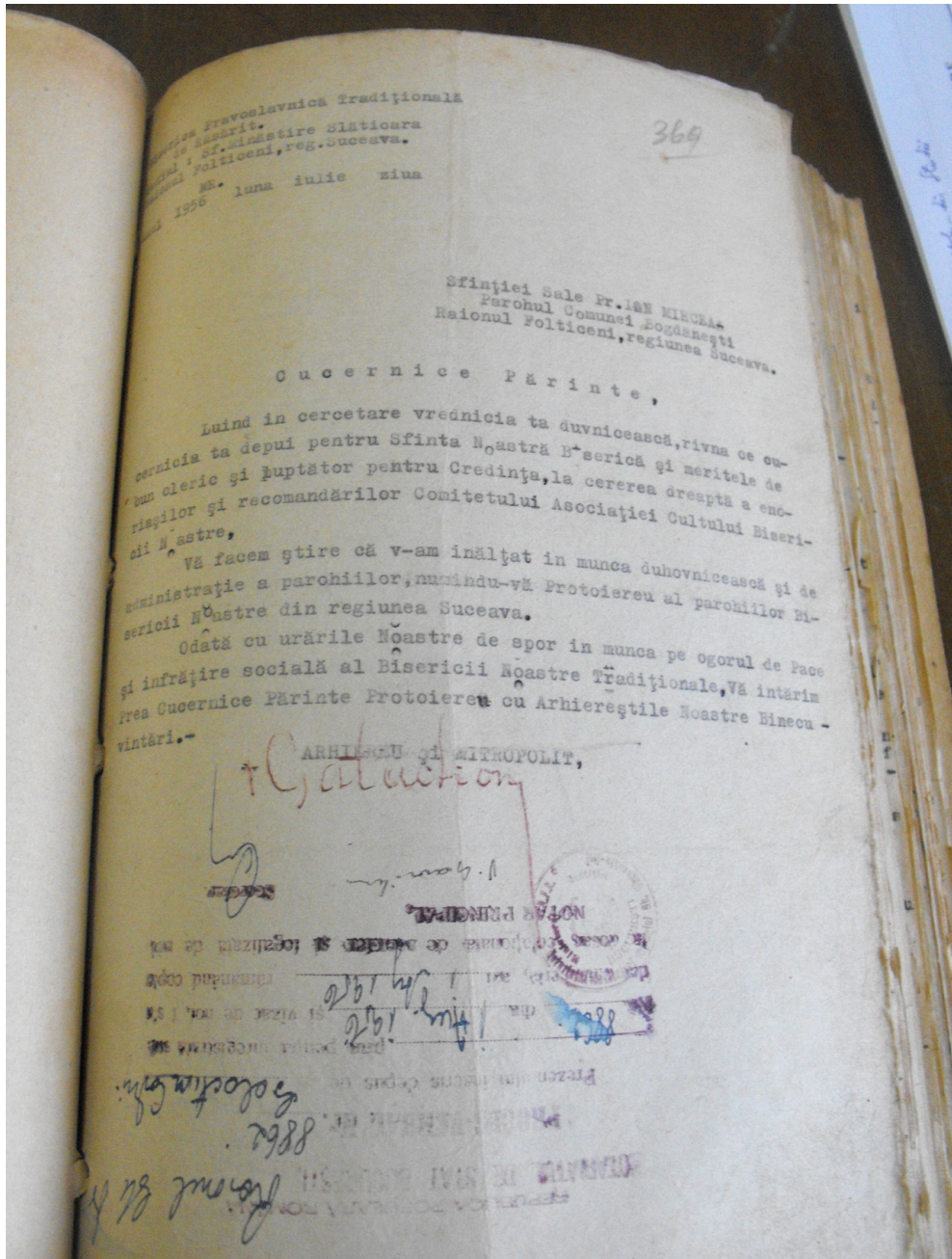
Cad cu smerenie adîncă în fața Sanctității
Voastre, și Vă implor cu mare tînguire și d-
tot sufletul și inima să Vă milostiviți pentru
jalea și lacrimile mele, să bine voiti a inter-
veni în calitate de Presidinte către Sf. Sinod,
să mi se erte gresala ce am făcut, făgăduind
Unalt Prea Fericii Voastre și Sf. Sinod, că de

aici înainte voi păstra cu toată sfînteniea
 și stricteta disciplina dată de Sf. Sinod, ru-
 pînd orice legătură cu ticăloșii ce m-au dus
 în eroare așa de grav.

În acelaș timp, vă mai rog pînă la pămînt să
 aveți toată îndurarea și să dispuneți cît mai
 curînd redarea pensiei care îmi este atît de in-
 dispensabilă pentru îngrijirea sănătății cum și
 eliberarea bagajului pentru chilie de la Mo-
 năstire.

Smerit întru Domnul creștin și
 monah Gataction
 Sf. M^{re} Cernica în 8 Sept. 951

APPENDIX 14. Galaction Cordun elevates Father Ion Mircea, parish priest of Bogdănești Village, to the rank of Protopope (Archpriest) for the parishes of Suceava County (1956)



APPENDIX 15. Work order signed by Galaction Cordon (1957)

BISERICA ORTODOXA ROMINA PE STIL VECHI DIN R.P.R. 123

Sediul Central : Bucuresti

Nr. 1
1 ianuarie 1957

DELEGATIE
(Ordin de serviciu)

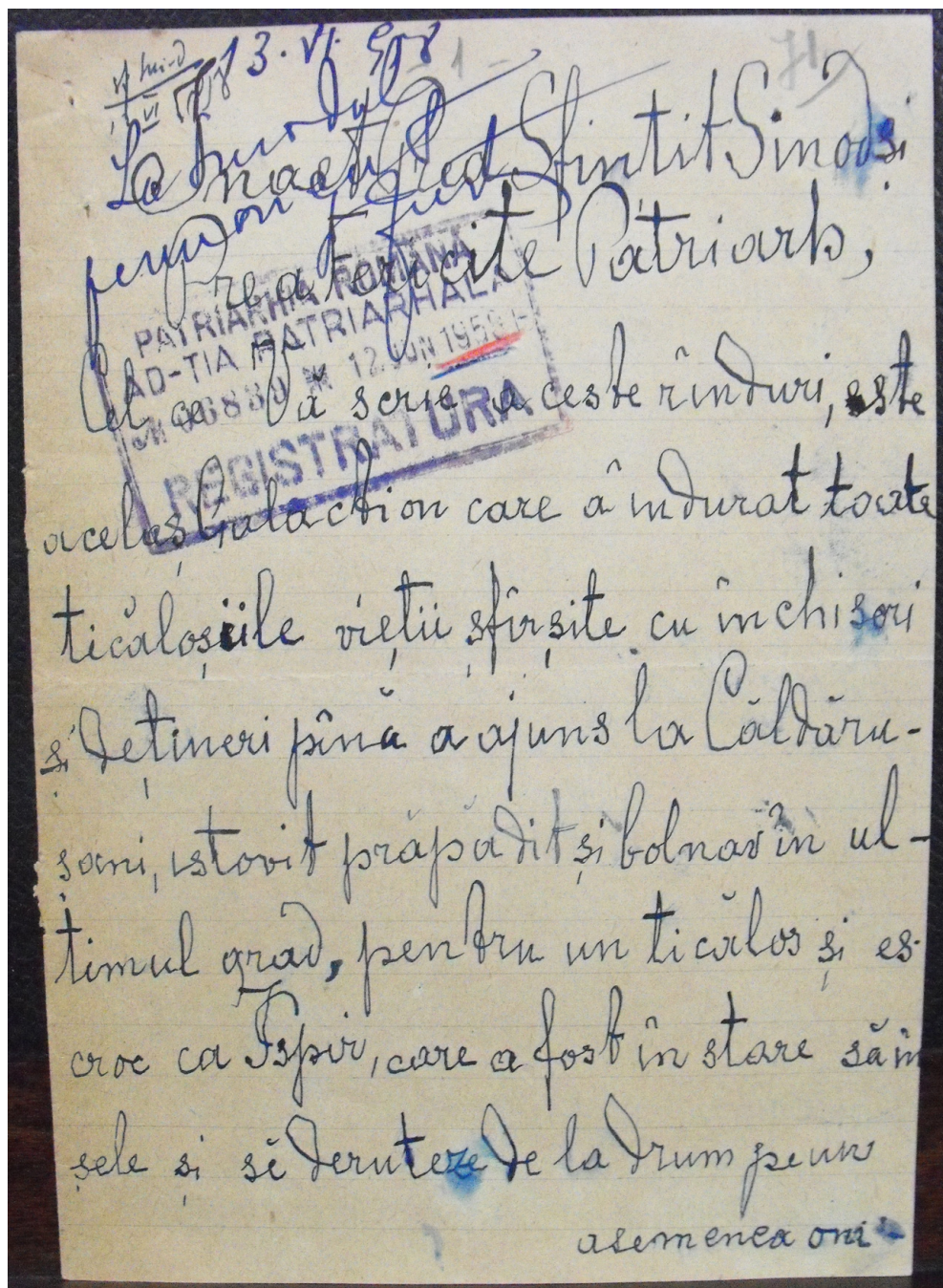
Protopopele decanu Iordan dela Parohia Comunei Rotopănești - Brădărești raional Fălciu regiunea Suceava se deplasează în interesul serviciilor de cult ale Bisericii noastre, în parohia comunei Rotopănești - Brădărești raional Fălciu regiunea Suceava în intervalul dela 1 ianuarie - 31 martie 1957.-

Drept care îl imputernicim cu prezenta spre a-i servi în fața autorităților și a comitetelor parohiale.

+ Galaction
ARHIEPISCOP și MITROPOLIT

SECRETAR
Cous. + ulea

**APPENDIX 16. Holograph letter written by Galaction Cordun,
with the signature of Patriarch Justinian (June 13, 1958)**



ca mine, distrugându-i viața în
 2- treagă și sănătatea completă
 merge în reputația de-a mori
 bun la ceară.

Da, când mă gîdese și la planu-
 rile lui de viitor, dacă ar fi fost
 liber mă căsătoris și mă bucur
 în același timp, cînd mă recunosc
 ca autor al minicicui, lor...
 Tîndea, numai ~~forțat~~ mie n-a
 făcut rău, ce mai era să facă

3- ne asociindu-mă la plurierele
 lui fiablice și acționînd fără
 se simtă el formă împotriva.
 Beștie de Ispir, era gata să
 provoace o răscoală populară
 în anul arestării, dacă nu-l
 închideau în una de nuntă, în
 nostru și al meu personal.
 Că am suferit și eu multe, e
 drept, dar gustul m-a găsit ne-
 vinovat și atunci, eu cer, iubesc

- 4 -

cît am și pot să dovedesc, cî m-am
 lăsat pentru totdeauna de stil
pechi, și chiar, cî m-am fost de cît înse-
 lat și așa, pînă m-am lămurit
de ticăloșia stilistilor, cer încă
 odată, repet cu toată smerenia
 dar cu toată tăria, dreptul la
 ridicarea caterisii.

Atita Vă rog, ca să pot și eu la
 urmă să slujesc o Sf. Liturghie
 și să mă

-5-

împărtășese ca un creștin a-
devărat

Vă mulțămesc cu metanie
la pământ
până și vă sunt recunoscător
până la ultima suflare

Galaction

P.S. Prea Ferice Stăpîne, /
Dati-mi voie să mai adaug
încă cîte-va cuvinte și anume
Galaction

-6-
Am trecut cu vederea faptul
sărbătorii de 10 ani ai pas-
torii Sanctiului Voasbe.
Si acum când a venit ziua
mi-a sosit si memoria că
că eu am fost atunci sin-
gurul si cel mai vustru al
hierarh al țării care am par-
ticipat la acest Mare act
si slujit, ca după 10 ani,

-4-
inde să mă găsesc??
Si totuși ade vreau este, că
m-a cugest și la o clemen-
ță cu acest prilej, în care
să fac și eu parte, mai ales
si pentru motivul că am
luat parte la act ca sluji-
tor efectiv, singur pe acea
 vreme, cu situație deose-
bit de bună pentru acel timp
si pentru viitor care în mo-
mentul

8 -
 de față este prezent, ca să
 mă cugeț serios că pentru
 motivele onoarei numeaț să
 fiu și eu din dragoste către sf.
 biserică cât de cât socotit că
 fost ca astă și milostivindu-lă
 să-mi ridicat căterisirea și să
 mă treci în rândul celor bu
 ca înainte. Eu astăpt și
 cred că voi căpăta de la clementa
 bunățatii și a celor 10 ani pe ca
 în sarbătorim cu toții. Și oșadept
 și eu smeritul aștept cu cea
 mai mare încred

APPENDIX 17. Holograph letter written by Galaction Cordun, with the signature of Patriarch Justinian (September 22, 1958)

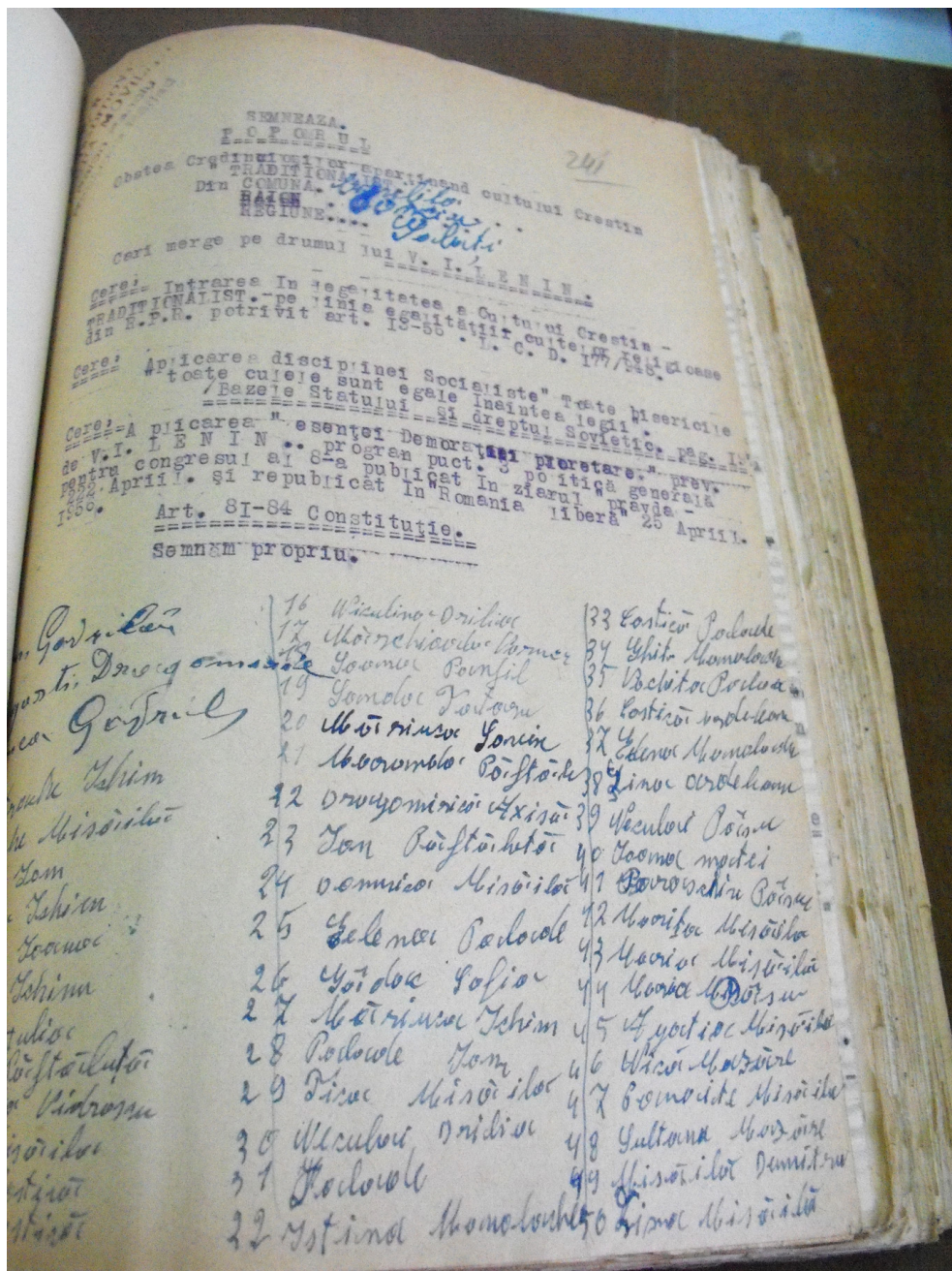
Sanctității Sale
 Prea Sfințitului Patriarh Justinian,
 Iași

În vederea evenimentului: Donării
 Sfîințului Sinod la București, de sî
 eu V-am mai adresat și alte rugămînti,
 cu smerită metanie vă rog pentru ul-
 timă oară să bine vîrți să propuneți
 și se-mi ridicăți caterisirea după făgă-
 duință, care mi-ati făcut-o cînd m-ati
 primit și m-ati ertat.

Aștept cu îndoită nerăbdare momentul
 încredințării unei slujbe la care să mă pot
 încredința de Sf. împărtășanie și să anul-
 țămese iarăși cu închinăciune și metanie
 pîrî la pămînt.

Galaction
 22 Septembrie 1958
 Sf. Monahie Căldărușani

APPENDIX 18. Memorandum of Old Calendarists of Furcenii Noi-Tecuci, requesting the official recognition of the Traditionalist Christian Cult



**APPENDIX 19. The Traditionalist Christian Cult.
Work Order for Martinian Comănici (1951)**

ENTRALA
Căminul Creștin Tradiționalist
SOANE JURIDICA
Nr. 154/57 M.D. 118/23-V-46
Gara 2-a
BUCUREȘTI

ENTRALA
Căminul Creștin Tradiționalist
SIRE Nr. 319-
Noembrie 1951-
42

14 NOV 1951

Se cunoscute Onor Minister.
le. Mo. Oficial Nr. 162
din 3 Iunie 1946

ORDIN DE SERVICIU

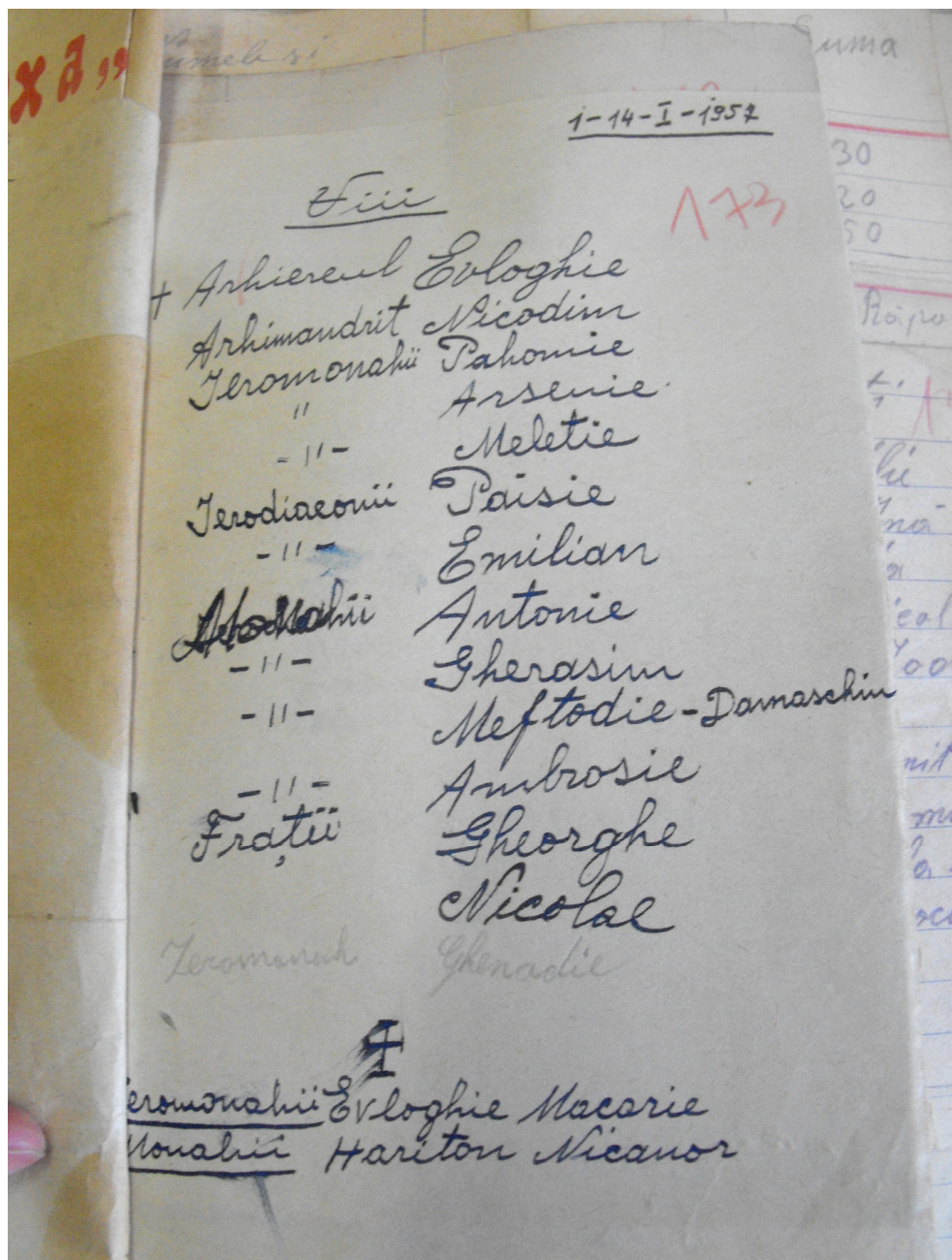
Se confirmă de noi că Părintele Martinian Comănici
calitate de Preot. Duhovnic - merge în serviciul organi-
zei acestui Cult. La schitul Copăceni ca duhovnic la
și mai departe pentru a merge în comuna
noastră Godreani Sefor - Monița, Putnov - Ymbra
și Iscuți - pentru a presta servicii religioase la
șiră în legalitate conform art. 126 din 3 Iunie 1946. din regulamentul Statutar
ord Nr. 38. 955 1945. Decizia Nr. 26.639 a Ministerului Cultelor Oficial
126 din 3 Iunie 1946. Prezentul Ordin are valabilitate 90 zile
cu începere de la data 4 Noembrie 1951 - până la data.
4 Februarie 1952.

Rugăm autoritățile civile și militare de a lua act de prezentul
în dat în cadrul organizației și exercițiul Cultului Creștin Tradiționalist.

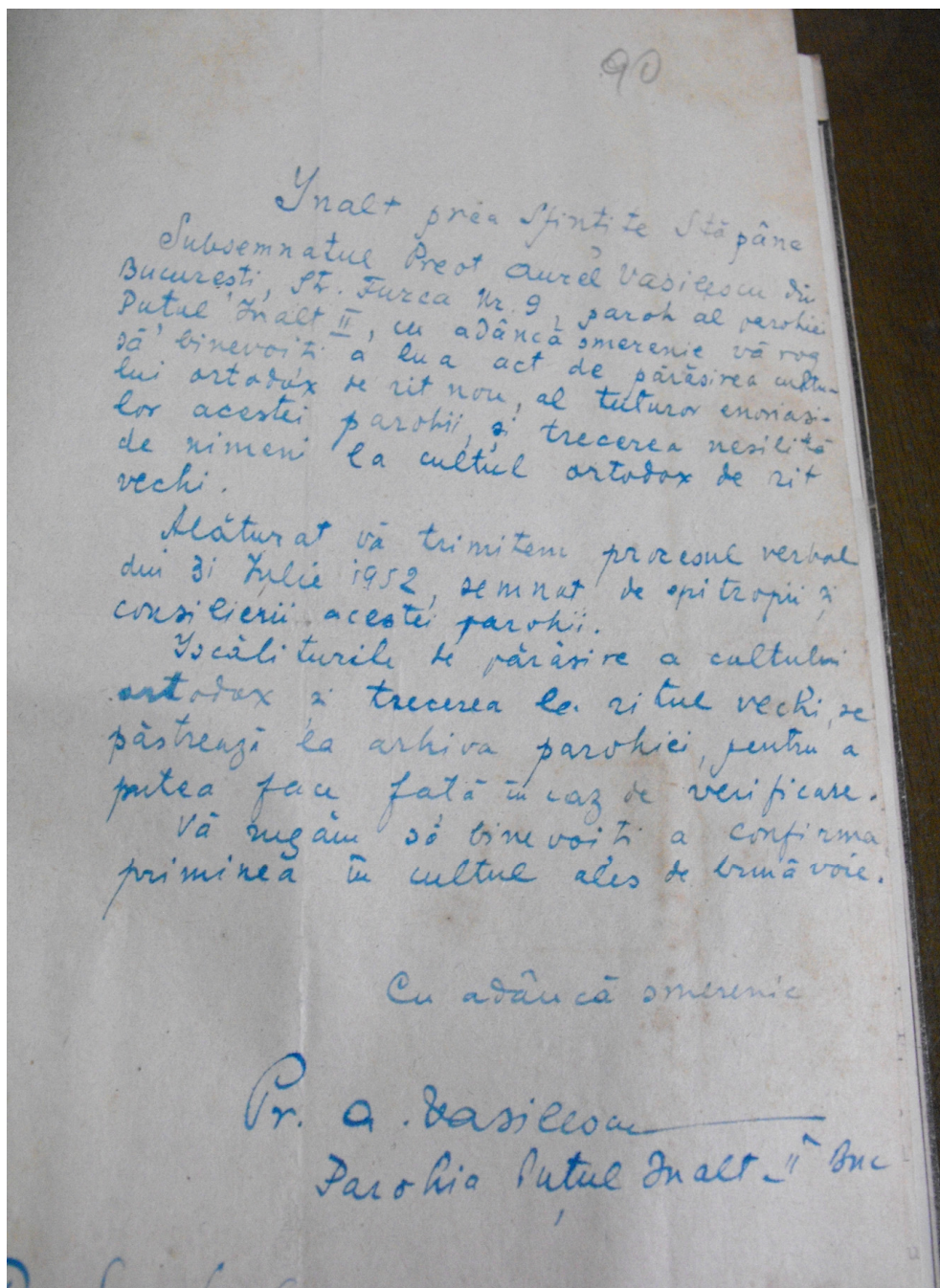
P.R. cu însoțitor sau fără însoțitor.

Președinte administrativ -
rile anu
SECRETAR
Secretar
Constantin

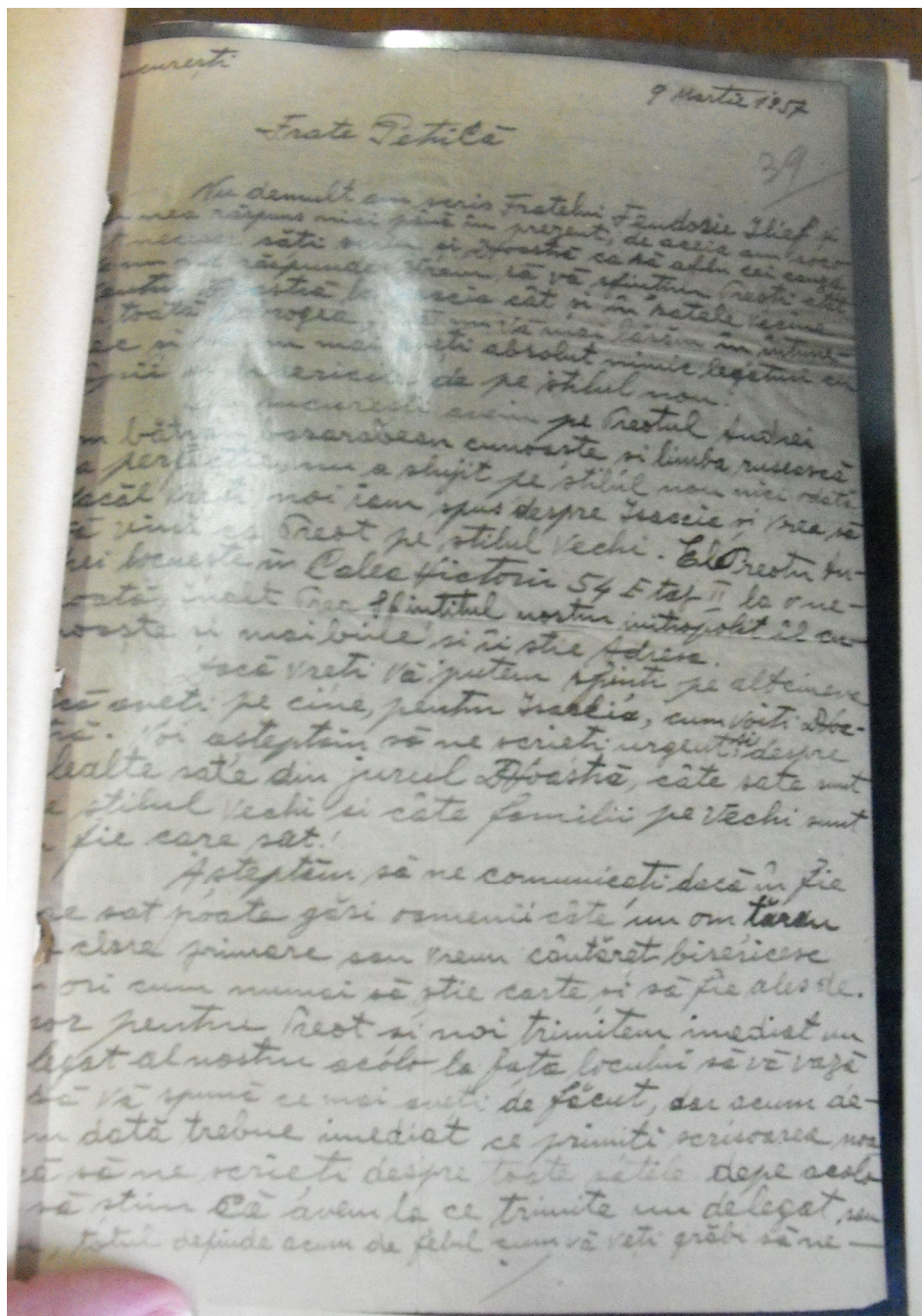
APPENDIX 20. *Pomelnic* [list of names to be remembered by the priest, during the Holy Liturgy] written by an Old Calendarist believer, with Evloghie Oța titled as bishop



APPENDIX 21. Holograph letter written by Father Aurel Vasilescu, announcing that he had joined the "Old Calendar Orthodox Church"



APPENDIX 22. Holograph letter from Evloghie Oța to an Old Calendarist believer (March 7 1957)



scrieti Hostra, atât despre starea în care vă
lăsați în isecărie cât și despre ratele scine.

Înainte de a veni Hostra în București, scrieți-mi
când voi să vă vom răspunde bucuroși.

Păstăți secret scrisoarea noastră și tot
ce se vorbește cu Poporul de peste tot să fie
arte secretă, că altfel nu vom putea face nimic.

Gresinta este liberă întrădăstăr din partea conștiinței
și partidului nostru, pe care să nu îl ținem. Suntem
multi omi, căci libertatea noastră a stărilor seclă
datorită absolut numai conduceri Comuniste
se spune la articolul 84 din Constituția P.R.R.
toate Cluburile sunt libere să se organizeze și
să funcționeze fără stingherială.

De aceea vă dau sfatul meu să fiți nu
mai supuși stăpânirii ci chiar cu multa
agoste și dăruie fațate de înalte con-
cere fiind primii înfăptuitori și executori în
toate. Și să nu uitați nici de cum să primă
toritate a conduceri este Sfatul Popular din
număr, deci comportarea să vă fie în strânsă
atură clipă de clipă și atunci, la ori ce dorin-
ță a Hostra veti fi sprijiniți de Sfatul Popular
când Sfatul vă sprijinește atunci toate treburile
erg bine. Supremă Hostra spune Sf. Evangelic.

Arhiepiscopul Bucureștilor

Ioana Tutoz

+ Episcopul Eobodie.

**APPENDIX 23. The situation of churches, monasteries
and parishes of the “Old Calendar Orthodox Church
[Biserica Ortodoxa de Stil Vechi]” in 2007**

- “Transfiguration of the Lord” Slătioara Monastery, Râșca, Suceava county
- “The Life-Giving Spring”, Brădățel Monastery, Horodniceni, Suceava county
- “Saint Martyr’s Mina Monastery”, Roșiori, Suceava county
- Eden Monastery, Broșteni, Suceava county
- Moișa Monastery (Holy Protection of the Theotokos), Boboceni, Suceava county
- Păișeni Monastery (Dormition of the Theotokos), Cornu Luncii, Suceava county
- Buda Skete (Sunday of the Holy Myrrhbearers), Râșca, Suceava county
- “The Nativity of Saint John the Baptist” Skete, Neagra Șarului, Suceava county
- “Saint Anne” Skete, Vama, Suceava county
- Heroes’ Skete Boroia, Suceava county
- “Annunciation of the Theotokos” Skete Râșca, Suceava county
- “Saint Martyr John the New” Parish, town of Suceava
- “Saints Emperors Constantin and Helena” Parish, town of Fălticeni, Suceava county
- “Life-Giving Spring” Parish, Oniceni, Suceava county
- “Holy Trinity” Parish, Fântâna Mare, Suceava county
- “Saint Parascheve” Parish, Vadu Moldovei, Suceava county
- “Nativity of Theotokos” Parish, Vadu Moldovei, Suceava county
- “Dormition of Theotokos” Parish, Baia, Suceava county
- “Holy Trinity” Parish, Mălini, Suceava county
- “Holy Prophet Elijah” Parish, Slatina, Suceava county
- “Saint Martyr Demetrios the New”, Parish, Boroaia, Suceava county
- “Holy Prophet Elijah” Parish, Săcuța, Suceava county
- “Ascension of the Lord” Parish, Bogdănești, Suceava county
- “Dormition of Theotokos” Râșca, Suceava county
- “Saint Martyr George” Parish, Drăgușeni, Suceava County

- “Saints Peter and Paul”, Rădășeni, Suceava county
- “Saint Martyr Panteleimon”, Cornu Luncii, Suceava county
- “Saints Archangels Michael and Gabriel” Parish, Broșteni, Suceava county
- “Saint Martyr Demetrios” Horodniceni, Suceava county
- “All Saints Sunday” Parish, Liteni, Suceava county
- “Nativity of the Theotokos” Parish Preutești, Suceava county
- “Sunday of the Saint Fathers” Parish, Șaru Dornei, Suceava county
- “Saints Apostles Peter and Paul” Parish, Vatra Dornei, Suceava county
- Brădițel Monastery – “Protection of the Theotokos”, Poiana, Neamț county
- Dobru Monastery – “Saint Hierarch Nicholas” Vânători, Neamț county
- “Dormition of the Theotokos” Skete, Negrești, Neamț county
- “Way to Calvary”, Poiana Teiului, Neamț county
- “Theotokos Portaitissa” Skete, Grințieș, Neamț county
- “Protection of Theotokos” Skete, Bahna, Neamț county
- “Pentecost Sunday” Church Piatra Șoimului, Neamț county
- “Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple” Parish, Brusturi, Neamț county
- “Saints Archangels Michael and Gabriel” Parish, Brusturi, Neamț county
- “Saint Hierarch Nicholas” Parish, Răucești, Neamț county
- “Holy Trinity” Parish, town of Târgu Neamț, Neamț county
- “Beheading of Saint John the Baptist” Parish, Grumăzești, Neamț county
- “Saints Emperors Constantin and Helena” Parish, Vânători, Neamț county
- “Saint John the Baptist” Parish, town of Piatra Neamț, Neamț county
- “Saint Hierarch Nicholas” Parish, Zănești, Neamț county
- “Saint Hierarch Basil” Parish, Borlești, Neamț county
- “Saint Prophet John the Baptist” Parish, Ceahlău, Neamț county
- “Saint Martyr George” Parish Poiana Teiului, Neamț county
- “Dormition of Theotokos” Parish, Reditu, Neamț county
- “Nativity of the Theotokos” Parish, Țibucanii de Sus, Neamț county
- “Saint Hierarch Nicholas” Parish, Războieni, Neamț county
- “Thomas Sunday” Parish, Răucești, Neamț county“
- “Dormition of Theotokos” Parish, Brusturi, Neamț county

- “Saint Hierarch Basil”, Răucești, Neamț county
- “Holy Apostles” Parish, Hangu, Neamț county
- “Saint Martyr George” Parish, Bodești, Neamț county
- “Saint Martyr John the New”, Hangu, Neamț county
- “Saint Parascheve” Parish, town of Iași
- “40 Holy Martyrs” Parish, town of Pașcani, Iași county
- “Ascension of the Lord” Parish, town of Pașcani, Iași county
- “Holy Three Hierarchs” Parish, Târgu Frumos, Iași county
- “Saints Archangels Michael and Gabriel” Parish, Balș, Iași county
- “Saint Martyr Demetrios” Parish, Cotnari, Iași county
- “Saint Martyr George” Parish, com. Moțca, Iași county
- “Saint Ierarh Nicholas” Parish, Moțca, Iași county
- “Nativity of Theotokos” Parish, Mogoșești, Iași county
- “Saints Apostles Peter and Paul” Parish, Tansa, Iași county
- “St. John Chrysostom” Parish, Mironeasa, Iași county
- “Saint Stephan” Parish, town of Vaslui
- “Saints Emperors Constantine and Helena” Parish, Dragomirești, Vaslui county
- “Nativity of Theotokos”, Bârlad, Vaslui county
- Iana Parish, Iana, Vaslui county
- “Holy Trinity” Monastery, Cucova-Valea Seacă, Bacău county
- “Prodromitissa (Icon)” Monastery, Palanca, Bacău county
- “Saint Photini” Monastery, Valea Uzului, Bacău county
- “Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple” Skete, Cașin, Bacău county
- “Saint Panteleimon” Skete, Asău, Bacău county
- “Saints Joachim and Anna” Skete, Căiuți, Bacău county
- “Saint Prophet Elijah”, town of Bacău, Bacău county
- “Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple” Parish, Secuieni, Bacău county
- “Saint Nicholas” Parish Sascut, Bacău county
- “Saint Hierarch Nicholas”, Moinești, Bacău county
- “Saint Hierarch Nicholas, Poduri, Bacău county

- “Saints Archangels Michael and Gabriel” Parish, Blăgești, Bacău county
- “Nativity of the Theotokos” Parish, Onești, Bacău county
- “Saints Emperors Constantin and Helena” Parish, Orbeni, Bacău county
- “Saints Archangels” Monastery Bolotești, Vrancea county
- “Holy Myrrhbearers Sunday, Bolotești, Vrancea county
- “Saint Apostol and Evangelist John” Racova, Vrancea county
- “Saints Archangels Michael and Gabriel” Monastery, Adjud, Vrancea county
- “Saint Pachomios” Skete, Păunești, Vrancea county
- “Beheading of Saint John the Baptist” Skete, Paltin, Vrancea county
- “Saint Demetrios Basarabov” church Viișoara, Vrancea county
- “Saint Martyr George” Parish, Păunești, Vrancea county
- “Saints Apostles Peter and Paul” Parish, Focșani, Vrancea county
- “Nativity of Saint John the Baptist” Dealul Paltinului, Vrancea county
- “Presentation of Christ in the Temple” Parish, Vintileasa, Vrancea county
- “Saint Martyr Demetrios” Parish, Tâmboiești, Vrancea county
- “Saints Archangels Michael and Gabriel” Parish, Câmpuri, Vrancea county
- “Saint Prophet Elijah”, Mărăști, Vrancea county
- “Holy Trinity” Monastery, town of Galați, Galați county
- “Annunciation of Theotokos” Parish, Cuca, Galați county
- “Saint Martyr George” Parish, town of Galați, Galați county
- “Saints Emperors Constantin and Helena” Parish, Tecuci, Galați county
- “Saint Archangels Micael and Gabriel” Parish, Liești, Galați county
- “Dormition of Theotokos” Parish, Umbrărești, Galați county
- “Nativity of Saint John the Baptist” Monastery, town of Tulcea, Tulcea county
- “Saint Prophet Elijah” Monastery, Dunavăț, jud. Tulcea county
- “Saints Joachim and Anne” Monastery, Cetalchioi, Tulcea county
- “Saint Anastasios” Chilia Veche, Tulcea county
- “Holy Trinity” Parish, Izvoarele, Tulcea county
- “Sf. Archidiacon Stephen” Parish, Isaccea, Tulcea county
- “Exaltation of the Holy Cross” Monastery, Lacu-Sărat, Brăila county
- “Nativity of Theotokos” Skete, Ploiești, Prahova county

- “Dormition of Theotokos” Monastery, Bucharest (Televiziunii street, no.13)
- “Nativity of Theotokos” Monastery, Mircea Vodă, Constanța county
- “Life-giving Spring”, Monastery, Agigea, Constanța county
- “Saints Petere and Paul” Parish, Medgidia, Constanța county
- “Saint Hierarch Nicholas” Skete town of Giurgiu, Giurgiu county
- “Saint John Maximovici”, Skete Cernica, Ilfov county
- “Saint John Iacob” Skete Moroieni, Dâmbovița county
- “Saint Martyr Mina” Skete Bisoca, Buzău county
- “Annunciation of the Theotokos” Monastery, Mitreni, Călărași county
- “Finding of the Head of St. John the Baptist” Monastery, Bumbești, Gorj county
- “Saints Emperors Constantine and Helena” Skete, Câmpeni, Alba county
- “Holy Trinity” Skete, Albac, Alba county
- “Cincture of the Theotokos” Parish, Reșița, Caraș-Severin county
- “Thomas Sunday” Monastery, town of Brașov, Brașov county
- “The Ascension of Lord” Skete, Săcele, Brașov county
- “Saint John Jacob the Chozebite” Parish, Păltiniș Botoșani county
- “Panagia Portaitissa Icon” Skete, Păltiniș, Botoșani county
- “Saint Demetrios” Parish, Botoșani county
- “Holy Trinity” Skete Crasna, Maramureș county
- “Saint Martyr George” Skete, Borșa, Maramureș county

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